

Edward J. Hegarty

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# HOW TO RUN A MEETING

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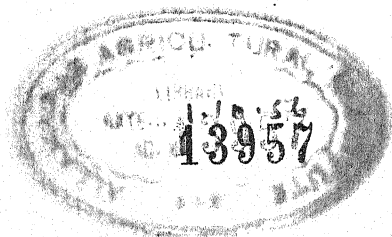
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## HOW TO RUN A MEETING

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To  
AUNT TUDY

*who has stayed at home  
while Uncle Ed has traveled  
about learning how to run  
meetings.*

## PREFACE

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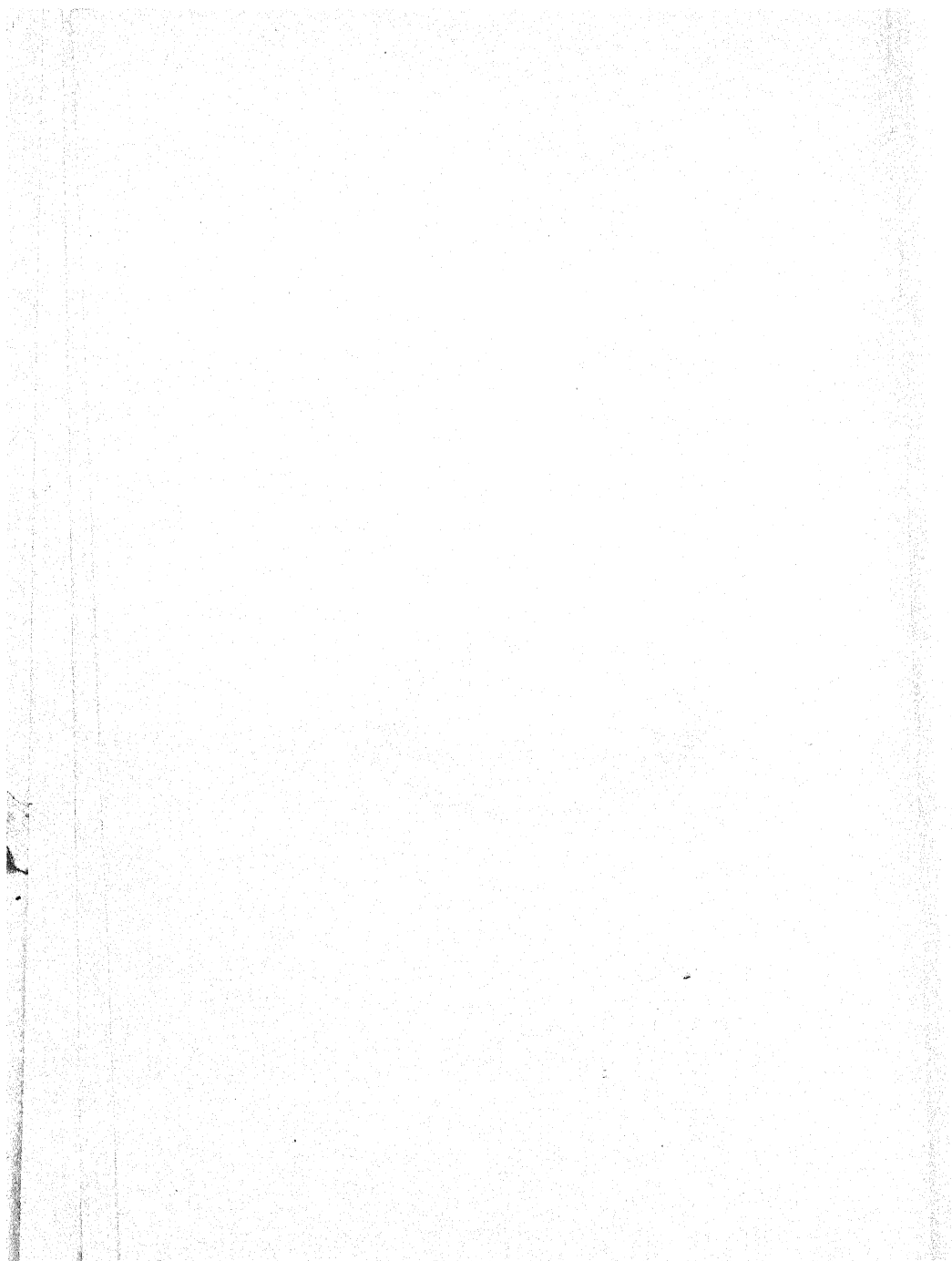
THIS BOOK is written to help you put on better meetings. If you are stuck with the job of running club, association, or committee meetings, you'll find here in black on white some suggestions that can help you get your meetings out of the rut. If you are the president, the secretary, or the chairman of a committee, trying to get members out to your meetings, to keep them interested while they are there, and to send them home feeling that they get a lot for the dues they pay, there is something here for you.

The author has been in your job—no matter what it is. Always he has been up to his neck in all manner of extracurricular activities that call for meetings: discussion groups, church clubs, a Boy Scout troop, trade associations, educational courses, and committees. He has appeared as guest speaker at hundreds of meetings of luncheon and dinner clubs, church organizations, and fund and cause drives. Yes, he has been around.

As a club member he has been mixed up in the promotion. As a guest speaker he has had plenty of opportunity to see how others make their clubs go. On these pages he has sifted the good from the bad. He tells you what to do and what not to do. He has tried to put one or two helpful ideas on each page, ideas that you can use to make your meetings better.

Even though all of us seem to love to go to meetings, the writer believes that sitting in a meeting is the hardest work we do. He feels that anything he can do to make that job easier is worth the effort. If the book helps you, it will help the dues-paying member even more.

EDWARD J. HEGARTY

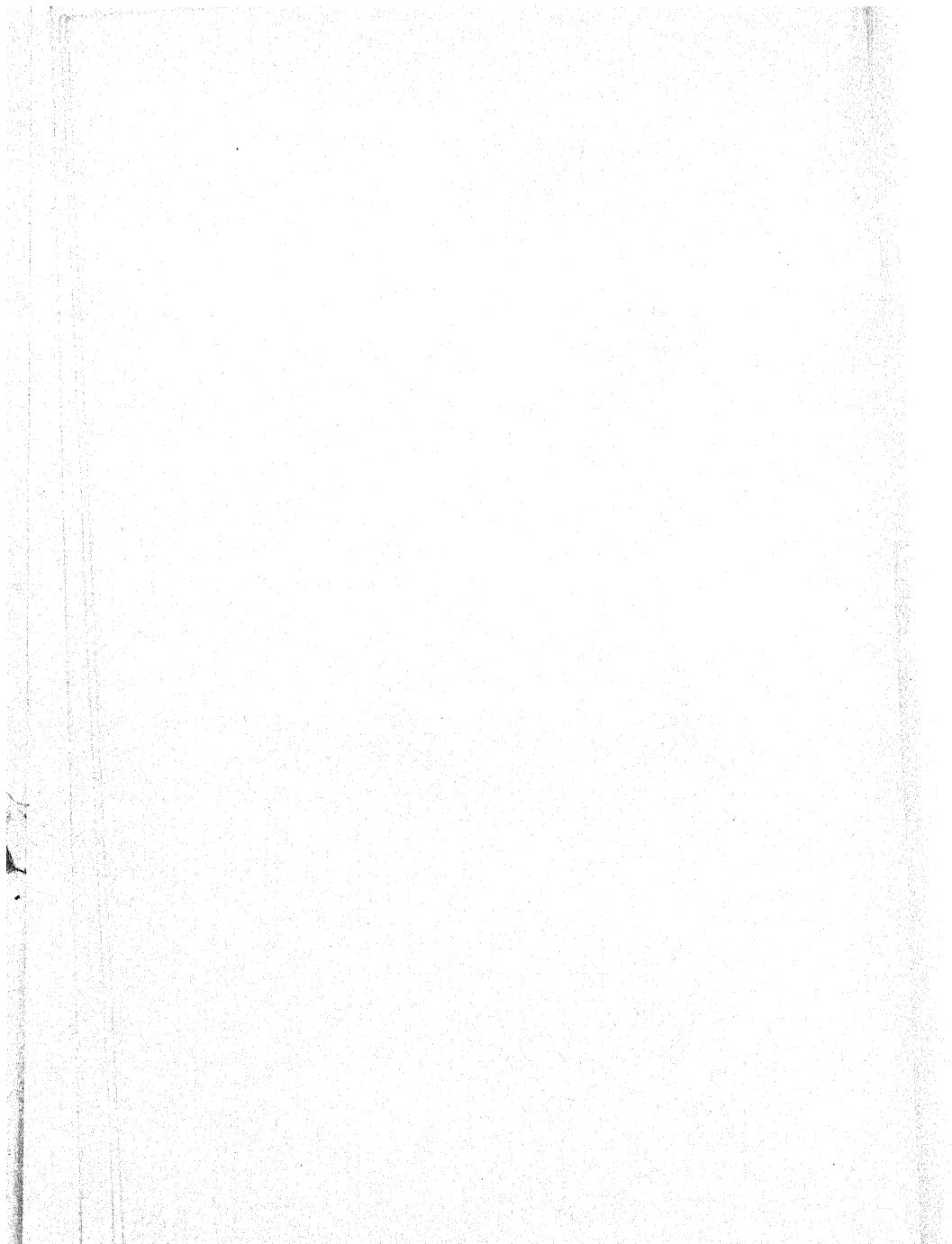


## *To the Ladies—A Kind Word*

THIS BOOK is written as if all club meetings were put on by men. That's chivalry, daughter! What is said here applies equally well to you girls who have meetings. The brothers are used for illustrations even though some of the stories come out of experience with women's clubs. Since the men make the same mistakes, they won't mind taking the rap.

And so as you laugh at the descriptions of Harry What's-his-name messing up the job of chairman, think of the dear lady who was president of your group two seasons ago. Remember the one with the tall hats? Alike, aren't they? Both you boys and girls can have better meetings. Let's hope these suggestions help to that end.

E.J.H.



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## PLAN YOUR MEETING

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SOME PEOPLE are gifted at running meetings. If you are one of those unfortunates you are probably putting on the meetings of your club, complaining of the great amount of work, and loving every lick of it.

What—I'm wrong—you don't like it? Just last month you told yourself that you'd quit at the end of the year and let someone else carry the ball? Yes, I know. But you won't quit. You like to run the club meetings. You do it better than anyone else. The job is a headache, but there is some consolation. Down deep you know that the person who runs the meetings is the most important cog in your club.

In that you are absolutely right. Maybe the club will never publicly acknowledge that fact by giving you a gardenia, a purse, a scroll, or a pen-and-pencil set. But you are the works. The president may be good, the directors better, but if you are running the meetings, you are the spark plug that keeps the club going. I know that from experience.

Once upon a time I was the spark plug of a small discussion club. It was a live outfit with a membership of twenty, and we were mighty proud of the fact that every meeting approached almost 100 per cent attendance. As secretary, I handled the notices, the telephoning, and other promotion. I helped organize the discussions, assigned subjects, and did other odd jobs. A change in my work made it impossible for me to continue as secretary. I resigned, and the club never held another meeting. Now there was plenty of interest in that club. The



members wanted to continue, but with the spark plug dead, the club went out of existence.

That case no doubt is unusual. Your club might not fold if you moved out of this program job. But if you are good, the club would slip, unless it was lucky enough to come up with someone just as good or better. Usually a club doesn't have too much manpower for this program chairman's job. Here is an illustration of how much importance I attach to this job of yours. Not long ago I was asked to organize a type of club in my home town. I told the national organizer who was after me to form the club, "I am too covered over with work to tackle the job, but if I could locate a young fellow about thirty who has a flair for this type of work, I would show him how it should be done."

Now there is a need for that type of club in my town. It would be helpful to its members and there would be little trouble in getting enough members. The problem was in keeping the club going. We needed a spark plug for that. And until that spark plug shows up, I advise against organizing. Anybody can get a club together. It takes a gifted genius to keep its programs going.

That individual's first job is to plan the meetings. The members of a club may feel that all they have to do is to pay dues and get to meetings on time. And that is about all the average member has to do. He sees the wheels go around, without realizing they are going around. But for the program chairman, the plan comes first. So let's start with the plan. Perhaps there is a pattern for your meetings. That pattern may be set through custom. You have a meeting with a guest speaker, you have a meeting that is a discussion session, or you have a meeting put on by groups of the membership, but no matter what the pattern each new meeting calls for another plan.

Even if your meeting is a simple luncheon meeting at which the president presides, you have a guest speaker, the chairman of the program committee introduces the guest speaker, and

one or two committee reports are given, a plan is needed. The speaker has to be lined up, the promotion handled, and the meeting hall arrangements made. Usually a club does well on those things. It's from that point on that they begin to fumble, and therefore suggestions in this chapter will have to do with the meeting itself—the part the members see.

It seems simple for the president to call on the chairmen of the committees for reports and to ask the chairman of the program committee to introduce the guest speaker, to thank the guest speaker, and to announce the next attraction. It is simple, but let's review some of the things that should be done. The president has to know what committees to call on. As chairman of the program you have to know whether or not the chairmen of the committees will be there and, if the chairmen are not there, who will substitute for them. The chairmen have to know that they are going to report so that they will be prepared; they have to know how much time they can have for their reports.

One help in planning a meeting is a synopsis of the meeting action. Write this in detail and send a copy of it to everybody who will take part in the meeting. Here is a sample.

The president opens the meeting. 1 minute.

He asks Mr. A to lead the singing of the national anthem.

Mr. A leads in the singing. 3 minutes.

The president thanks Mr. A and the accompanist. 1 minute.

After luncheon the president opens the meeting and asks Mr. B, chairman of the picnic committee, to report. 5 minutes.

Mr. B, the chairman of the picnic committee, reports.

President thanks Mr. B. Asks for any action necessary. 3 minutes.

President asks the chairman of the program committee to introduce the guest speaker. 1 minute.

Mr. C, chairman of the program committee, introduces the guest speaker. 3 minutes.

The guest speaker speaks. 30 minutes.

After the guest speaker is finished, Mr. C, the chairman of the program committee, leads in the questions and answers. 10 minutes.

When the question-and-answer period is finished, Mr. C thanks the guest speaker. 1 minute.

Mr. C turns the meeting back to the president. 1 minute.

The president closes the meeting. 1 minute.

Time: 61 minutes.

Now there is a synopsis for the simple luncheon or dinner meeting, and you may well ask, "What planning is there on that?"

Well, there is quite a bit of planning. Let's name a few of the things that must be taken care of in advance:

You have to know that Mr. A who is going to lead in the singing will be there.

You have to have someone to play the piano for Mr. A.

You have to know that Mr. B, chairman of the picnic committee, is to be there, and you have to inform him that he is to report and tell him how much time he is to take and when the report is to come. If Mr. B is to be out of town, you have to have a member of his committee there to make the report for him.

You have to know that the president will be there or, if not, who will substitute for him.

You have to find the guest speaker, invite him, get his acceptance, arrange for someone to meet him, and bring him to the meeting.

You must make provision for any presentation aids he needs.

You have to have biographical data on the guest speaker so that you or Mr. C can introduce him. This should be written out.

You have to organize a question-and-answer period. If the speaker wants questions asked, you must check with him and get the questions he wants asked. Then pass these questions among the audience so that the questions will be asked.

You should work up an adequate word of thanks to the guest speaker. Even if he isn't too hot, you should have a good word of thanks for him.

That is a rather sketchy outline of the planning you need to do at a simple meeting. Of course, there are a lot of other details to plan. You have the lunch to consider, the room

to worry about, the arrangement of the tables and all the other details of such a meeting, but my suggestions have to do merely with the performance that the club members see.

Time planning is one of the biggest problems in any meeting. I have seen clubs horse around so long with committee reports, introduction of guests, and with other less essential items, that the guest speaker's time is cut in half. Always in your planning, figure out how much time the guest speaker needs and see that he gets it. No doubt he has traveled quite some distance to talk to you. In many cases he has done this at his own expense. He should not be cut short. Your planning should give him adequate time. Plan also to start promptly. You want to finish according to your schedule. Thus, the timing of every part of your meeting is important.

Mark the time that each person has on the program. If you give the chairman of the picnic committee three minutes to report, put down that he has just three minutes to report, and be sure he understands. Note that on the sample synopsis each part of the program is timed.

If you have a head table and persons are to be introduced, make sure that you have the names right and that the chairman knows how to pronounce them. If you don't know, ask. If business titles are important, get them on the list that the chairman uses in his introductions. It is better to have the names of the people at the head table on a sheet of paper. Remember that the chairman is a nervous individual, and if you put the names on cards, he might shuffle the cards and thus get the introductions mixed up.

The smooth-running meeting always has a detailed plan behind it. That plan is usually worked out by the chairman of the program committee. The more you plan everything in detail, the better meeting you will have.

Here is a review of these suggestions on the planning of your meeting.

1. Plan in detail the meeting, the advance publicity, and the promotion.
2. Check the arrangements, the hall, the date, the details of the meal, and so on.
3. Plan the timing. Assign a time limit to each part of the meeting.
4. Write a synopsis of the meeting, and send copies to everybody who will take part.
5. Check with everybody on the program on attendance and on the part they will play.

## HOW TO GET SPEAKERS

---

IF YOUR club is one that can pay speakers, you will probably get good ones. As a rule most of the talk-for-pay speakers give a good performance. They either deliver or get other work. So if you can pay, a lecture bureau in your neighborhood will deliver the speaker for you. But let's assume your club doesn't pay and you use guest speakers. Then this speaker becomes a continuing problem, a problem that will plague you through all the time you head the program committee. For after the meeting today, you have another meeting coming up, and then another.

One thing to remember about getting speakers for free is that a speaker who has a talk written is easier to book than one who has a message, but doesn't have it written in speech form. Most speakers find it real work to write a speech, and for that reason the man who has a speech not yet written is reluctant and needs coaxing, because he is not ready to go. However, the fellow who has the speech written and has exhibits all ready, can talk at the drop of a hat. Such a speaker is usually a push-over; he's leaning backward anyway.

Thus, it will pay you to watch the reports of other meetings in your local papers. When you see that a man has appeared as a guest speaker, find out how to get in touch with him, and then go after him. If he has done the talk once, it won't be too difficult to get him to do it again. Another advantage is that this speaker is available in your neighborhood and can appear without giving too much of his time.

Another way to turn up speakers is to attend meetings of other clubs. When a speaker appears at one of these clubs and looks good, sign him up. In this way you know what to expect beforehand and you again get a man who has a talk already prepared. Vary this by checking with the program chairmen of the other clubs. When they get a hot speaker, have them let you know. Call a luncheon meeting of all the program chairmen of the local clubs and work out some kind of a deal by which you use the good speakers who appeared at the other clubs. Study the programs of clubs in small towns and you will find that speakers make the rounds. Time and again when you mention a speaker who appeared at your club, you are told, "I heard him at Rotary."

Of course, any value a speaker can give you is determined pretty much by the interests of the members of your club. When considering a speaker, think of what will interest the members. Don't grab any speaker to fill a date. Your job is more than filling dates—you want to fill the date RIGHT, with a speaker who will interest the members. Do that and the club will feel that their program chairman is on his job.

An excellent source of speakers is your own club membership. Perhaps you have some good talent in the club to which you belong. Not long ago a member of one of my clubs did a talk on the various peace agreements that have been in the news in recent months. Nobody had suspected that he could do this talk, but the man had made a hobby of studying the various agreements and he did an excellent job.

This type of public affairs subject is good for club talks. Most members won't read details of such questions. They feel they should, but somehow they don't get around to it. A talk on the subject is then a service to them. Another similar talk I heard was one done by a lawyer on "Strange Laws Still on the Statute Book." Here is a different type of talk—a man talking on his business. Yes, it will pay to analyze your club, to find out the speaking prospects you have. Think in terms of busi-

ness, hobbies, talents, or causes in which a member might be interested. All offer interesting speech material.

Another check you can make is on the hobbies of people in your town. The stamp collector might do a good job on stamps for you. Further, he might bring along exhibits that would interest the group. An antique dealer might talk on a certain type of furniture. No doubt, there is somebody in the county who has collected data on the county's history. There might be a city fellow who has taken over a farm. Not long ago, I heard a man who was building a small farm do an excellent job before his club meeting on his project.

Business of the town offers many opportunities to bring you speakers. One of the first places to start with is the electric utility. They have a large number of subjects such as lighting and homemaking, on which they can furnish speakers. The gas companies can also help out on such programs. Then you have local representatives of industries, such as building, chemicals, and steel. The local agents who sell the materials of these industries might be able to arrange to get speakers for you.

Causes and charities are another source of speakers, for example, the local activity for underprivileged boys, the people who run the kids' camp, the hospital, the milk fund, or the Boy Scouts. Any of these may furnish material for good talks. The principals will be glad to come to your club meeting and tell about their work. They welcome the opportunity to attract new workers or new contributors.

The headlines in your newspaper offer another source of speakers. Let us say that a foreign country suddenly comes into the news. At the moment, when it is in the newspapers, everybody is interested in it. You might check over the home town to find out who in the town knows anything about this country and about its problems. Book a speaker, suggest that the members bring questions, and you will fill the house to capacity.

One talk could be done each year by the editor of the



local newspaper on the subject "The Ten Big News Stories of the Year." That is his business, and since the members of the club have lived through the ten big stories, they no doubt will find this an interesting meeting. I can guarantee this one, for I have put it on a number of times, and it always goes over big.

Not very long ago I heard a man in the advertising business a member of the club, talk on the fan mail that comes into radio stations on various programs. This was a most interesting talk. It gave a cross section of the kind of people who write fan mail.

Another source suggestion is the schools. Many of the schools run debating clubs and it might be well to bring out some of the speakers in these clubs at your luncheons. In fact, one of the clubs might stage a debate in the time you have allotted to them. The youngsters in the school need the practice and it makes a good program for you. In the school faculties you may have many men interested in various types of work who could do good talks for you. When a new scientific development appears in the news, it might be smart to check with the science teachers in the local schools to see if they couldn't give you more detailed explanation of what the newspaper stories mean.

Government, too, offers all sorts of possibilities. Start with the city hall, then the county building, and then the Federal group—people know too little about our government or how it works. And you can uncover angles of government that will make excellent talks.

The way to get speakers is to work at it. You have to use your head and to use every source available to you. The suggestions given here are but a start. You, no doubt, can find hundreds more of them. In fact, if you would walk around the block in which you live or in which you have your office, you would no doubt find three or four suggestions for talks before your club.

Let's start out from the house. Here are the ideas: "The Trees of the County," "The Flowers of the Season," "Care of the Streets," "Collection of Ashes," "Shrubbery and Its Care," "Street Lighting," "Birds of the Neighborhood," and "Bird Houses." There are eight and I haven't reached the first corner.

Now let's start at the office. First, I cross the railroad—"Crossing Safety," "The Railroads," "Grade Crossing Elimination," "The Crossing Watchman's Job,"—now a coal office—"The Coal Business"—and next a farm cooperative,—"The Cooperative Movement." Then I pass an ice cream factory—"The Ice-cream Business"—and an auto body shop—"Automobile Accidents." Again eight and I am up to the first corner.

Study the possibilities of each of these subjects. Figure how the subject matter could be slanted to make the talk interesting to your club; then find a speaker for the talk and you have a date filled.

Getting speakers means work. You have to work at it and think about it constantly. If you put in theicks and give the job the proper amount of thought, you can get speakers who will make you the best program chairman the club has ever had.

Here again are some suggestions for getting speakers for your club meetings.

1. Attend meetings of other clubs and try to sign up the good speakers.
2. Check with the program chairmen of other clubs.
3. Watch newspapers for reports of speakers at other clubs, and find out how to get in touch with them and use them.
4. Check through your own club roster to find out what hidden talents you may have. Consider business, hobbies, outside interests, charities, and other causes.
5. Explore the hobbies of the people in the town. Many people with hobbies will make excellent speakers for you.

6. Check the businesses of the town—the electric or gas utilities, the building-supply people, and the agents of any other business who might furnish a talk for you.

7. Watch the news. When a big story appears in the news, try to get a speaker who will talk about it. Usually, there is somebody in town who knows enough about it.

8. Check the paid secretaries of the causes and charities. Which of them can furnish speakers who will make interesting talks?

9. Check the local schools. If they have debating clubs or speaking activities, use these speakers as the basis of, say, one program each year. Make it an annual affair so that the youngsters will work hard to prepare for it.

10. Check the local or state government agencies—the head of each municipal utility is a prospect, each county officer has a story. Then there are the county agents, the home-demonstration agents, and the lettered agencies.

## GETTING OUT THE CROWD

---

As I travel about talking before various kinds of clubs, the thing that burns me up most is the sloppy way in which the clubs promote attendance. Most of them seem to think that any kind of a notice will get out the crowd. They send out the same type of notice month after month, same size, same color of paper, indential reproduction method. Each week or each month the member gets a notice that looks exactly like the one that came the month before. But that's not all, the copy reads like the previous wheeze. The attraction isn't given the play it deserves. The reasons why a member should attend are buried among a lot af detail about business matters of the club.

I may not be talking about your club, but even so it might help to give some thought to that notice you send out. Of course, that notice must cover details. But put some selling into the copy. Have it show why it is of interest to club members to attend. You might make an outline of what should be covered under these headings:

1. WHY THE MEETING AND THE SUBJECT?—You may not have to explain the meeting, but if you have a guest speaker, justify the selection of the subject.
2. WHY IS THE SUBJECT IMPORTANT?—Is the subject in the news today? Is it important to the community, to the country?
3. WHAT IS YOUR INTEREST IN THIS SUBJECT?—Here's where you must do a real job. Show why the members should come to hear this speaker. If the speaker is an entertainer, play up the fact that

they will get some real entertainment. If the speaker has a subject that they should understand, point out the reasons why. Show why it is to their interest. Let members know that there is something about this session that sets it apart, that it is not just another meeting. Don't assume they know, tell them.

4. WHY THIS SPEAKER ON THIS SUBJECT?—Who is the speaker? What has he ever done? Why is he an authority on this subject? Give full details about him — print his picture if you can, but get over the idea that this speaker knows his stuff, that he is good on his feet, and that the members won't waste time by coming out to hear him.

5. WHY AT THIS TIME?—Now justify why this is a good time to have this speaker. Explain your great good fortune in getting a talk on this subject at this time.

#### PRODUCING THE NOTICE

The notice that you send out to your members may be anything from a post card to an elaborate printed broadside. I have seen them all — penny post cards, letters, carbon copies of letters, mimeographed sheets, and printed pieces. Strangely enough I have seen good jobs done on all forms. It is not the printing that brings out the crowd, or the cost of the notice, it is the headwork that goes into what is printed.

The mimeographed post card in announcing a meeting can't let you tell much about your speaker, his subject, or why the audience should be interested. But if the post card is all you can print, try to pick up its appearance. Vary from small type to large type and from one color of ink to another, blue in June, red in May. If you can use a small illustration or small cartoon, do that.

Remember the post card doesn't look important. It has a good chance of getting lost in the mail if you send it to a home or office where there is a lot of mail. For that reason try to do something to it to doll it up. Buy enough government post cards for a few meetings, and print a red border around the

card or print one side in a color and then print the notice over the color. One club I know has its post cards printed in colored stripes like a zebra. It doesn't cost much to do this, but it does add to the chance of getting attention. The member sees the zebra-striped card, and he knows a meeting is coming up. If a post card is all the budget affords, try to do something that will get attention for it.

Another popular type of meeting notice is the mimeographed letter-size sheet. Some clubs decorate these notices with cartoons so that they are certain to get attention. Not long ago I was talking on the subject of my book, "How to Run a Sales Meeting," before a club that used a mimeographed notice. The chairman drew a picture of the book on the stencil and used that. The book with some cartoons scattered around the page made a notice that stood out and attracted attention.

If you use the mimeographed notice, it may be well to think in terms of different colors of paper, pink for February, blue for March, and so on. You have a number of colors of paper to choose from. You might want to standardize on one color of paper so that they will know that the notice is from the club. Don't, if you can help it, use white paper.

Remember, too, that you can use various colors of ink on the mimeograph. It pays to vary these notices so that they don't all look alike and they don't get lost. A little color may pick your notice out from the ordinary mail and get more attention for it. You can print in more than one color too. The second color costs a bit more, but it is effective.

A man who runs a mailing house or a printing reproduction establishment might be an ideal member to put in charge of getting out the notices. Ask him to get some variety into them and he will do it. One club I know has a man who runs a small printing business put out the notices. This man sells a special type of reproducing machine. He varies the production

of his notices so that the members of the club can see the type of work he does on the machine he sells. Thus, he has an interest in getting out good and varied kinds of notices to the group.

The suggestions above apply also to the printed notice. If your club is big enough to put out a printed notice, you no doubt have members who can work out good-looking notices for you. It is well to put an advertising man on the job of writing the notice. Usually every club boasts an advertising man who, if he can be induced to take the job, will turn out a workmanlike job that sells each attraction.

In any kind of notice you send out, sell the attraction. Take a sheet of paper, and write on it the reasons why anyone should come to hear this drip you are stuck with as a guest speaker. Such things as "We want to build attendance" or "Last month we had 100—we want to beat that this time" have no pull at all. Your notice must say something like "This speaker will show you how to save 10 per cent on your income tax." Such a promise would bring them out. It is your job to determine what this attraction has to offer. Make up your list of reasons why and get it into your notice. Tell them why they will gain if they come to hear this particular speaker or to take part in this program. A man has to be sold on the idea that he would rather come to your meeting than do whatever else he can do at the time of the meeting. If he isn't sold on that idea, he won't come.

#### FOLLOW-UP OF THE NOTICE

The notice is seldom enough to get a crowd out to a meeting. Notices should be sent to everybody in the club, but any kind of follow-up will help build attendance.

Once I was active in a club that had about six hundred members. We were getting about forty out to our meetings. I made up a list of fifty or sixty men who weren't coming to the meetings and started writing them short two or three-line personal letters, something like the following:

Dear Joe:

You'll enjoy the meeting Monday night I'm sure. The speaker's a character and full of laughs. Why not plan to show and bring Pete with you. What say?

With best regards,  
Ed

I had my secretary type these notes in her spare time. I signed them, and it is amazing how they helped build attendance. The man who had a personal invitation felt more like coming. Because he had been asked to bring someone else, he did a little promotion on the meeting himself. In a short time, we had 200 people at those meetings. Now this meant a lot of work, selecting the names and pairing them, but the work was worth it, for we got out the attendance.

Another similar scheme is to give ten names to ten members of the club and have the ten write letters to their list similar to the one above. These letters should be short and they should be original letters and not carbon copies. Such notes give a personal touch to attendance building, and they work.

This group idea has been used with good results by many clubs. If the club is in a certain community, one member in the neighborhood is picked out and given the names of three to ten people to get out to the meeting. Then each month when the notices go out, he is reminded of his assignment. In working out such a scheme, don't give the man too many names to handle. Most will handle three or four, and a few will handle ten. Usually, I can speak to three or four without effort. If you ask for more, I may do nothing.

Another scheme is to give club members a certain number of people to telephone. Here you give the member a list of the names and telephone numbers of the people, and ask him to call them about the meeting. This is helpful in getting out a group. You might carry this further by having a member offer to bring the people in his car.

The telephone can be used to follow up any printed notice.



At one time, I was chairman of a Boy Scout troop committee and we needed four or five men at the Scout meetings every Friday night to time races and do other such jobs. The presence of the fathers also helped to encourage the boys in their work. I worked out a scheme of telephoning four or five men every Friday night and asking them to come out. In time I had more men than I needed every night, for when I found that there were certain men who could spend the time, I had the regulars telephone other friends.

#### TIMING OF THE NOTICE

It might be well here to say a word about timing of the meeting notice. The invitation should reach the prospective member at the proper time. If it goes out too far ahead, the member may forget about it. If he doesn't have enough time, he may have made other engagements that keep him from coming. Clubs that meet every week usually get the notice to the man the day before the meeting and he hasn't time to do much about it. He can't invite guests or build the attendance. In sending out invitations, think of the member, of his convenience, not yours. Most clubs are pretty careful about watching dates of holidays so that their meetings won't conflict, but some keep right on going regardless. This should be watched.

#### ACCEPTANCES

If you want acceptances from the members, make it easy for the member to send you his acceptance. Then if you want the attendance, follow up by telephone before the meeting date to make sure that you get full attendance. Some of your members will pay no attention to notices. Even if you say they must send in the acceptance, they won't bother about it, but they will come if they feel like it. Others will send in acceptances and then forget all about it. Usually in a large club these things balance out; but time and again I have gone

to speak to clubs where the advance information told me that they would have fifty or sixty and found that they were lucky to have twenty.

Now that was not my fault. An announcement of this same talk to a similar group had packed them in on other occasions. But on these occasions the notices had not carried the load.

#### THE TICKET OF ADMISSION

Many times it pays to print a ticket of admission even if the meeting is open to anybody and if no admission is charged. A ticket helps remind the members of the meeting. How many times have you checked a ticket for the date, time, or place of the meeting? The ticket can be printed to give all the information the member needs. It can also be used to build outside attendance. When you are inviting the architect to hear the building-supply speaker, you can send him a ticket. The ticket will help get him there. Perhaps you don't need a ticket for its usual purpose, but it may be helpful to you in getting out the crowd.

When you want the members to bring guests, you might try the plan of sending three tickets to each member and telling them that they can invite three guests. You know what will happen—they will telephone to say that they want to bring five. And as a special dispensation, you can agree to let them bring the five.

#### BUILDING OUTSIDE ATTENDANCE

If your club is interested in having outsiders attend your meetings, there are a number of ways to do this. Many such activities can be built around the speaker. For instance, if you have a speaker from a certain business, you might ask him for suggestions on outsiders who will be interested. Let's say the speaker is from the building-supply business, then invite other people in this business—all the architects, builders, contractors, building-supply dealers, and so on. These can be invited by

mail directly or you can ask members to invite them. Even in the closed meeting it may be well to ask the guest speaker if there is anyone he would like invited; perhaps his brother-in-law lives in your town or his cousin. He may want them invited. If he does, it is a sign he is good. Usually a few more makes little difference to you, and most times you want the extra handful.

#### NEWSPAPER PUBLICITY

Perhaps newspaper publicity can help you build the attendance at your meetings. There is no doubt that a notice in the newspaper about your meetings helps build the prestige of the club. Get someone who knows about newspaper publicity to handle your newspaper publicity for you. It might be well to get a public relations man if one belongs to the club. Get someone who knows how to write a story the way the newspaper wants it and who will see that it gets to the right editors, with the speaker's photograph. Please remember, also, that the speaker likes to see his photograph in print. He feels it is some justification for his spending the time or for his company spending the money to get him to come to your town to talk to your club. If you run a large club, it may be possible for you to hire one of the reporters on the newspaper to handle your publicity for you. Another thing you might do is to invite a reporter to sit in at your meetings. This, of course, doesn't help build attendance, although it does build for subsequent meetings. In writing the story for the newspaper, give all the facts. Use the who-what-where-when-and-why formula. Give all details, but read some notices of other meetings in the newspapers to see how your local newspaper handles this type of story. Then write your story over that pattern. Type all copy for the newspaper double spaced.

Always sell the attraction. In every part of your promotion and publicity tell what you have to offer, but put the emphasis on showing the other fellow why it is to his interest to attend.

Here again are some suggestions for getting out the crowd.

1. If you use a post-card notice, try to make it distinctive so that it will stand out in a stack of mail.
2. If you use a mimeograph notice, decorate it with drawings and consider using paper of various colors, so that it gets attention.
3. Use the personal note to a certain group of the members asking them to do something about helping you build attendance.
4. You might try a ticket of admission. This helps remind the member of the meeting.
5. Use the telephone to follow up the meeting notice. Telephone to certain keymen or have these keymen telephone three or four men each.
6. Get someone to handle your newspaper publicity who knows about publicity. If this is not possible, talk to the newspaper editors about how they want the material given to them, and then write an outline for your publicity chairman.
7. Watch the timing of your meeting, and don't let it conflict with holidays or other affairs, which might cut into your attendance.
8. If you want outside attendance at a certain meeting, make a list of the people in town who would be interested in the speaker, and arrange to invite them directly or through members.
9. In everything you do in promotion, sell the attraction. Show them what they will gain by coming.

## ARRANGING THE MEETING ROOM

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ANY ROOM is good enough for a meeting—that is what most clubs seem to think. Travel about as a guest speaker and you find that the people who put on meetings know little about how much the room arrangement can help make the meeting. What worries me is that they seem to care less.

The latter fact has been made quite clear to me when as a guest speaker I have tried to make some minor changes in room arrangement. Most program chairmen can't seem to understand why changes are necessary. By their manner they indicate that you are a little touched for even suggesting a change. This is the way the room always is; no speaker before has objected. "Why, we even had Mr. So-and-So," they mention a big name. Then their look at you asks, "And who are you to suggest—?"

But being dense and stubborn, I plough right on. As a result the club gets a better meeting, because I do what the program chairman should have done. I am sure too that if the chairman realized the importance of the room and its arrangement and knew how the room should be set up for the best effect, he would have made the changes I suggested. Since so many chairmen seem not to know the factors to consider, let's discuss a few of them.

First, select the best room available. If the meeting is held in a hotel, church, school, or public building, there is usually more than one room available. Look at all the rooms. The

best room for most meetings is one that is a little deeper than it is wide. A narrow room, set up the long way, is difficult because persons in the back of the room are too far away from the speaker. Try to keep out of any room with columns. The club wants to see the speaker, and he wants to see the members. The best room for a speaker is one that can be set up in the arrangement of a theater. When a meal is being served, this is difficult to achieve. But for the meeting without a meal, try for a room that can be arranged as much like a theater as possible. Such a room makes it easier for the speaker, and the audience is more comfortable.

Avoid a room with more than one entrance. The entrance of any meeting room should be at the back. This makes sure that anybody coming into the room during the meeting will not disturb the audience and will not unnecessarily disrupt any discussion. When you have a meeting room assigned to you, have the chairs set up so that the audience faces away from the door. If there are windows in the room, put the chairs so that the back of the audience is to the windows. The speaker, not the audience, should face the light. If the windows overlook a busy street, this is particularly important. You don't want half of your audience looking out the window instead of at the speaker. Speakers have a difficult enough time holding the audience without anything to steal attention from them.

Always place the speaker on a raised platform, one foot or more above the floor of the room. Just last week I attended a meeting in the ballroom of a local hotel. There were two speakers, one of them a short lady and the other a tall fellow. After the meeting I asked a friend what he thought of it. "The talks were O.K.," he said, "but all I could see was the top of the little dame's hat." He was in the tenth row and the people in front of him shut off his view. Now that hotel has platforms that could have been moved in, but the people running that meeting didn't know that or think the platforms necessary. Always put your speaker up off the floor.

If you have a head table, try to make it as small as possible. I know that some clubs feel they must seat all their officers, past presidents, and other notables on a dais, but try to get that rule revoked. When you have a large head table, you usually have to set the room up the long way of the room. Most times it is better to run the head table the short way of the room. This arrangement puts more of the audience in front of the speaker and not so much of it on his right and left. With the audience spread to the right and left, the speaker has to keep turning, now to the right, now to the left, but if they are all in front of him he can talk straight out at them. When you set up your head table on a dais, don't let them put tables for the members at the ends of the head table. If you have a head table, it might be well to place your speaker at the end of the head table, so that the people at the head table are a part of his audience. When I speak from a head table, I always try to move the people at the table out from behind me. At times, instead of doing this, I set up a place to speak in another part of the room, so that the head table becomes a part of the audience. This space apart should not be too far away. Not long ago, not wanting to talk from a head table, I moved to a stage in another part of the room. But the stage was at least twenty feet away from the nearest diner. I had to fight that twenty feet all through the talk. The audience should be close to the speaker, almost in his lap.

The shape of the room has much to do with the success of any meeting. A short time ago, I watched a program chairman set up his properties for a meeting in a large auditorium. After everything was ready, he roped off all the seats except those in the first three rows. There were sixty seats, and he seated his sixty in three rows—twenty in each. Such an arrangement made it difficult for the speakers who had to present the plan. It would have been much better if that sixty had been seated in six rows of ten, or in seven rows of nine. Always try to get the audience in front of your speaker.

If you are running a dinner meeting, avoid the U-shaped table for the group of fifty or sixty. This may be fine for a discussion session for a smaller group, say up to twenty, but if you are to have a speaker after the meeting the seating at the U puts the audience too far away from him for the size of the audience. Not long ago I spoke at a club where they seated the group for dinner at a U-shaped table. It was in a rather large room and there were easy chairs around the walls of the room. Before the speaking started some of the members ran to these easy chairs. The result was that when I got up to talk my audience was scattered all over the room. Here I had the U-shaped table with the further disadvantage of a large room in which my audience could lose itself.

After the meeting, a man from the audience said to me, "You did a good job in speaking to this audience, but I noticed that you had to work awfully hard. Why was that?" I told him it was the arrangement of people in the room. They had gotten themselves so far away from me that I had to work twice as hard to get over my message. If the audience had all been concentrated in the space between the U of the tables, I would have had a much easier job.

Tables set up across the room to give the audience a chance to write notes is also a difficult room for the speaker. The people in the room are too far away from the speaker. If possible, seat your audience at round tables. Then the audience is pretty evenly scattered over the room and it is not so difficult for the speaker to talk. The best arrangement, of course, is the theater arrangement. Try to come as close to that as you can.

For a small meeting in a large auditorium, rope off the seats in the back of the auditorium, and direct the audience to the seats down in front. It is difficult for a speaker to talk to empty seats. If it is in the summertime and there are seats by the windows, try to rope these off so that the crowd won't all be in the seats by the windows. Not long ago, I made a talk in



an auditorium and all my audience was on the two sides of the room and none of it out in front of me. Speaking to empty seats is most discouraging to a speaker.

Remember this: you can't move people after they have once seated themselves—you can beg, plead, and cajole, but they will stay put. Arrange your room so that they have only one place to sit and that place is where you want them to sit.

Try also for a quiet room. Twice within the last year, I have attended meetings in hotel rooms with a band practicing in the next room. Naturally, the speaker had to stop while the chairwoman fluttered out to still the din. If the room is on the street, you can't very well stop the noise from outside, but you can try to get a room away from the street.

The chairs in the room should be comfortable and not too crowded. Give each member as much room as he would have in a theater, and your seating will be about right. Remember the portable chairs you find around hotels, churches, or public buildings are usually smaller than the people who pay dues. Thus, a little room between chairs is welcomed by the customers.

Where you have a discussion club and the members will want to make notes, it might be well to use chairs like the ones in the one-arm lunchroom. If your meetings have large groups, you might hold them in the auditoriums of the local schools. The ordinary schoolroom with the children's desks is not too good, because most adults can't seat themselves comfortably at these small desks.

Make provision for checking the wraps of your audience. If there is not a checkroom handy, get some racks rolled into the meeting room so that the people do not have to sit holding their heavy coats.

It is well to have a lectern, one of these pulpitlike things which speakers use to support their notes. If the building or hotel in which you hold your meeting has no lectern, it might be well to have the club buy one so that you have it

for your meetings. Most speakers like to have a lectern on which to lay their notes. Some speakers need a lectern to lean on or to hang on to while they speak. At any rate, it is a good idea to have one available.

If you have a public address system, check beforehand to see that it works. Not long ago in a very large hotel, I watched the chairman of the meeting and the guest speaker clown through a period while the public address system was being adjusted. If you have a public address system in the room, make sure that it works. If the man who takes care of the system is an employee of the building, try to have him near by when the speaking part of the program starts. You don't want him over in the other end of the building when you need him to service the public address system.

If the speaker is to use a projector for a film, get the projector set and leave space for it in the audience. Be sure to have the screen high enough so that the people in the back of the room can see over the heads of those up front. Sometimes portable screens can't be adjusted high enough for everybody in the room to see. Check on that before the meeting starts.

Always check the lighting of the room. If there is not enough light in the fixtures, ask the hotel or the public building to give you more light. Usually, the janitor can arrange to give you what you want. He may have spotlights or other types of lighting equipment that will help show your speaker's exhibits.

Little thought is ever given to ventilation of the rooms in which people hold meetings. I have been attending meetings for twenty-five years and usually the room in which the meeting is held is filled with smoke long before the speaker gets up to talk. It might be well to work out a no-smoking rule for a room which it is not possible to ventilate. However, this is rather hard on most of the people, because when members sit down at a club meeting the first thing they want to do is light a cigarette. In selecting your room, try to get one

that can be ventilated, either through cross ventilation or by a ventilating fan. Remember that you can't keep windows open, because people sitting close to the windows will close them. Remember, also, that you can't have drafts, but you should try to work with the building in which you hold your meetings to get as much fresh air in the room as you can.

It is well, too, to know what kind of electricity you have available in the building. Most buildings have alternating current, but others have direct current, particularly in some of the old sections of large cities. If the speaker has certain motor-driven equipment in his exhibits, he may not be able to use it on direct current. Thus, you should be able to tell him what electrical current is available or be able to refer him to someone who can tell him.

The room can help make or break your meeting. Give some thought to it and try for the best arrangement you can get. Here again are some suggestions on arranging the room.

1. Select the best room possible.
2. Place the entrance at the back of the room. Don't use a room with more than one entrance.
3. Have the chairs set up so that the audience faces away from the door or from windows, which might distract their attention.
4. Have a raised platform for the speakers.
5. Provide the speaker with a lectern so that he will have some place to lay his notes, and make sure that it is at a convenient height.
6. Try to provide comfortable chairs, and don't crowd small chairs close together.
7. If there is a public address system in the room, have it checked beforehand so that the chairman won't have to worry about it when the meeting starts.
8. Provide a space in the room for the projector if films are to be shown.
9. Place the screen high enough so that the people in the rear rows can see over the heads of the people in front.

10. Provide a place for checking wraps.
11. Get the lighting of the room set up so that the speaker's charts or exhibits can be seen.
12. Give some thought to ventilation. Try your best to get some fresh air into the room.
13. Know the electrical supply available, so that when the speaker asks you have the answers.
14. Try for the right kind of a room—one not too wide and not too narrow.
15. Avoid the U-shaped table or tables across the room. If you have a group at dinner, seat them at round tables.
16. Try for a quiet room.
17. If you have a small crowd in a large auditorium, rope off the back seats, so that people have to sit down in front near the speaker. Rope off any seats you don't want used.

## HANDLING THE GUEST SPEAKER

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AT TIMES as the guest speaker at a meeting, I have been handled like a visiting potentate. At other meetings, they have treated me like an interloper who has the crust to come to talk to their club. Why, I can't figure. There are some clubs I wouldn't go back to on a bet because the people who run those clubs don't know how to handle a guest speaker. I've checked up on a couple of these lax clubs with other guest speakers who appeared before them. I thought that perhaps the group was allergic to me. But, no, other speakers had received the same bum's rush.

Perhaps no guest speaker has ever told you just exactly what he thinks of your club and the way you have handled his appearance before you. I am not sure that the people who have manhandled me have meant to be rude. I am rather inclined to feel that they just didn't know what they could do to help the guest speaker and make him feel welcome.

Your first contact with the guest speaker, of course, is giving him his invitation to talk before you and getting his acceptance of it. When he has accepted, get full information from him. Find out how much time he needs and the exact subject of his talk. Get as complete publicity material, biographical data, or photographs as you need. It might be well to make out a blank listing the information you need for the kind of promotion you do in your club. Then have this sheet mimeographed and send a copy to each guest speaker to fill out.

If you are going to write a story with quite a bit of information in it or print a circular with this information, you should outline the information you want. With a specific outline of what you want, you have a better chance of getting the material you need.

Not long ago, I was asked to speak to a group on a certain night. I accepted before I found out that another speaker was on the program with me. I didn't receive that information until a printed program was sent me. Give the speaker full information. Tell him the time of the meeting; it is not enough to give the date; he must know whether it is at noon or in the evening. Give him the place, and if it is difficult to find, tell him how to get there. Give him also the approximate attendance. Of course, we know that attendance varies with most clubs, but tell him what the average attendance should be. Tell him the names of other speakers, give him an outline of the program, and tell him when he is on, whether or not he starts off the meeting or comes after the other speakers, as his spot on the program may make a difference in the content of his talk.

Give him, also, a description of the personnel of your club. He will do a better speaking job if he understands who belongs to the club and the kind of people you will have there. Many times the names of clubs are not too descriptive of the membership of the club. I have spoken to sales manager's clubs where there were salesmen among the membership. Now you wouldn't expect salesmen to belong to sales manager's clubs, but there they were. I have talked to other sales manager's clubs, where only a sales manager who employed a certain number of salesmen could belong. Now the talk to those two groups had to be different. You couldn't talk on sales manager's problems to a group that had salesmen in the audience.

Next see what you can do to take care of the guest speaker to help him out in this visit to your town. Not long ago I made a talk in Birmingham, Alabama. My train arrived in town

at 7:45 A.M. The committee knew that I would arrive at that time, and when I stepped off the train there were six men to meet me. Now that is early in the morning for six men to be out. They took me to a hotel, where a suite had been engaged. They had breakfast with me. After breakfast, one man told me he was the committee in charge of the meeting room. He took me to the meeting room, showed me around, and we discussed arrangements. Then the committee asked about my plans for the day. I told them I would like to see the town in the morning and work on my speech in the afternoon. That morning one man took me in hand and showed me the town. At lunch time, they took me out to the estate of one of the members where we had a drink, then to a country club for lunch, and afterwards back to the hotel. At dinnertime, another group of club members came to my suite for cocktails, which had been ordered and furnished by the club. After my talk that night, a group took me to my train.

This is just an example of how one club took care of one speaker. While it is probably the grandest job ever done for any speaker, it illustrates a point. Here was a club that took the trouble to see that the guest speaker was handled, and right. Now it is not possible to take care of all guest speakers like that and most guest speakers don't want it. Many of them are in your town on business anyway and they want to transact their business during free hours. But always you can find out when the speaker will arrive and let him know that you are willing to arrange a hotel room for him. It might also be a good idea to see if he needs railroad reservations out of town. Many times you can get these reservations much easier than can the speaker or his office. You can help the speaker in other ways; for example, he might want to cash a check.

It is well, too, to have a speaker's entertainment committee. They could check up on the speaker's arrival, get in touch with him as soon as he is in town, and offer to take him around and show him the town. Many times the speaker doesn't want

anything, but if he would like to see your town and the sites of interest it is well to make the offer to him.

Have your entertainment committee see that the speaker is taken care of at lunch time if the meeting comes in the evening and he is in town during lunch. One program chairman I know finds out when the speaker is to arrive in town and where he will stay. When the man checks in at the hotel, there is a note waiting for him. The note advises the speaker to get in touch with the chairman and gives him the telephone number. The chairman then follows up by a telephone call to the speaker, showing him that the club wants to take care of him.

Anything you can do to entertain or help the guest speaker will get a better talk for you. Contrast the reception mentioned in Birmingham to another one in a town I won't name. Here I was scheduled to speak at a certain hotel at a luncheon meeting. The information sent me told me the name of the hotel and that it was a luncheon meeting at 12:30 P.M. I arrived in the hotel the night before. The club had made a reservation for me. I heard nothing from anybody connected with the club. Next morning after breakfast, I checked to find out where the meeting was to be held. The announcement board in the lobby gave me the name of the room. I checked on the room, went up to it, and looked it over. I felt that with the charts I had to show the head tables should be arranged a little differently. I talked to the hotel employees in the room and got the change made. At noon I took my charts down to the room, set them up, and then sat around waiting for the group to arrive. The club membership started to come in. The chairman of the program committee arrived and started talking to one of his friends. I sat there waiting to see how long it would be before somebody made a pass at hunting for the guest speaker. The president of the group arrived, he picked up with a group of his friends, and talked to them. A friend of mine, who had read that I was to be in town, came in. He greeted me, and we



sat down and talked. He wasn't a member of the club, but he wondered if he could attend the luncheon and if he would be welcome. We sat there talking and the president and his program chairman went about their business. Finally, just about the time everybody was ready to sit down to the table, the president started looking for me.

Can you see why that club is off my list? I wouldn't go back on a bet. Perhaps I am assuming a lot in saying that they would want me, but I am wanted at other places and so I don't have to go back to that club to keep in practice in making a speech.

One thing that is most important to the guest speaker is that you tell him exactly how much time he has. Then run your meeting so that you don't cut into his time. Some clubs have an adjournment hour. They have an ironclad rule that they are out of the room by one o'clock or some other selected time. That's fine, but that rule should not penalize the guest speaker. Not long ago I was talking at a luncheon club and was right in the middle of my talk when the president stepped up and announced that the time had run out and that I was supposed to stop.

This was the first intimation I had that there was any time limit on the meeting. My talk took thirty-five minutes. They had given me exactly twenty-one minutes. A lot of announcements and discussion about a golf-tournament had cut into my time. But, the point is that I didn't know they wanted to quit at 1:15 P.M. Besides, I can't see any common sense in a club asking a man to travel 300 miles to make a talk that lasted for just twenty-one minutes. I had a thirty-five-minute talk, and I could have told them that, if they had asked me. They didn't ask. They gave me twenty-one minutes, but they didn't tell me that beforehand.

If they were paying for the talk or even paying my expenses, this might have been all right. But this group was paying nothing. They had merely invited me to talk and they hadn't taken the trouble to tell me about their 1:15 P.M. closing time.

When you give your guest speaker his instructions, tell him exactly how much time he has. Most speakers can give you the talk in the time you suggest or can turn down your invitation if enough time is not available. But you must make your suggestion in time. If you wait until the speaker has gone over the time, then you can't expect him to feel right about being asked to stop.

If your club is one that has a business session, arrange for the guest speaker to talk either before or after the business session. As a guest speaker, I have sat through uninteresting business sessions of clubs while I waited to give my talk. That is a waste of the guest speaker's time. On other occasions when I have arrived, the chairman has broken into the business session to let me make my talk and get on my way. Don't inflict your business session on your guest speaker. Arrange for him to arrive after it is finished, or put him on before the session starts. Those business sessions may be important to you, but they are a pain to the guest speaker.

If the date with the guest speaker has been made a long time ahead, send him a letter near the date of the engagement. Sometimes work piles up on your guest speaker and he is not able to make the date. It is easy for a guest speaker to make a date two or three months ahead, but when it comes to the time to keep the date he may find that he is in a jam. Thus, it is always well to make that second check.

When your guest speaker arrives, show him the clippings of the newspaper publicity that has been used on the club meeting. He likes to know that you thought his appearance worth enough to get publicity for him. It is also a good idea to have samples of your invitations for him. Don't give him one of these, give him two or three. Perhaps he has a boss he would like to send them to. A certain speaker never tires of taking them home to show to the wife and kids to see if he can't get a little more respect around home. So far this has done little good, but his head is bloody and unbowed.

While the speaker may have given you full information about himself, you should always ask him what he wants said about him in the introduction to his talk. Many times the speaker can give you some tips on his introduction that will enable him to get off to a flying start. It may be well, too, to give him a diagram of the speaker's table, show him who is sitting there, and tell him who they are so that he will feel that he is among familiar people. For goodness' sake, get his name right. Someone is always introducing me as "Haggerty." One night a chairman a bit under the weather called me "Harrigan" and "Flaherty" in the same introduction. That doesn't bother me too much, as long as they stick to Irish names, but it would bother some people terribly.

When the speaker has left you, be sure to take care of the thank-you notes. This is automatic with most clubs. But it is amazing how many clubs let you walk away without thanking you. I remember one club that had twelve men write me asking me to talk at a meeting. The letters were obviously a planned campaign to get me to talk, and I did accept the engagement. However, after I had made the talk, not a single one of those people wrote to thank me. Surely, a few of them came up after the talk was over, shook hands, and thanked me for it, but not one of the twelve took the trouble to write.

Perhaps that was because Hegarty wasn't too good, you say? Well, maybe so, he has his good days and his bad, just like everybody else. But this talk happened to go over particularly well. And it seems common sense that a club which could develop a campaign to urge speakers to talk to them could also have the common courtesy to turn that campaign to work in thanking the speaker who did talk.

If you want a good talk from your speaker, plan to take care of him as well as you know how. If he feels you run a well-managed club, you will get a better performance.

Here quickly are the suggestions for handling the guest speaker.

1. Get full information from him—all the information you need for your advance publicity.

2. Give full information about the time of the meeting, the time you have allotted for his speech, the time of adjournment, the meeting place and directions for finding it, the approximate attendance, and a description of the membership of your club.

3. Find out when he will arrive, arrange for hotel accommodations, railway reservations, and whatever else he needs.

4. Call the hotel in which he will stop and leave word that on his arrival he is to telephone you.

5. Write a letter, which will be handed to him when he arrives at the hotel, giving him full details.

6. If the speaker has agreed to talk at a time months ahead, check with him again near the date of the meeting.

7. Appoint a committee to take care of the arrangements for the hall to see that the speaker gets everything he needs.

8. Appoint a committee to entertain him while he is in town. Have the committee check with him and find out what he wants; but don't plan anything ahead, because the speaker may not want any entertainment.

9. Ask him what he wants said about him in the introduction.

10. Give him a list of the personnel of the club.

11. If there are others on the program, let him know who they are and where he comes on.

12. Give him clippings of the newspaper publicity and copies of the invitations sent out, and tell him about the promotion you carried on to build up attendance.

13. Remember to send thank-you notes. If a number of people have written him asking him to speak, have the same group thank him for making the speech.

14. Let your guest speaker know he is important, and he will give a better performance for you.

## HELPING THE SPEAKER WITH HIS PRESENTATION AIDS

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IF THE ordinary club usually fumbles in the handling of a guest speaker, they do an even poorer job in helping the speaker with his presentation aids. Your guest speaker may need a blackboard, an easel, or a motion picture screen. He may need a table or a pitcher of water. Yes, he may need anything. Plan to find out what he needs ahead of time and give these things to him.

Every time I get an invitation to speak before a club, I am asked, "Will you need anything?" My invariable answer is, "No, I carry what I need with me."

And I do, for experience has taught me that it is good policy to depend upon the club for nothing.

Not so long ago I spoke on a program with another speaker at a meeting held in a public auditorium in the evening. A committee met us for dinner. After dinner the speaker tried to locate the aids he had asked for and that the club had promised to provide for him. They had written him, asking what he wanted. He had given them a complete list, and now they started to hunt. The aids were there, but nobody seemed to know where they were. Somebody had taken his letter and told somebody else and that somebody wasn't at the dinner. Now that was wrong. The man was spending his time and his money to make the talk. What he wanted should have been there ready for him.

As I have mentioned before, I have been in some towns

where they leave me to shift for myself until meeting time. But that never bothers me much. I find out from the directory in the hotel where the meeting will be. Then I check on the room and the room arrangement. Sometimes I change the meeting-room arrangement, much to the surprise of the club when they show up. But the meeting goes off because I take the trouble to get there ahead of time, get the things I want, and have them there ready for use when I want them. If I had all the dollars I have given to hotel porters for getting things for me that the club should have had ready, I would be a rich man. Yes, if I had only the dollars club members have watched me slip to club porters, I would do well enough.

One way to make sure that this job is handled properly in your club is to appoint a one-man committee to see that everything is on hand. I suggest one man because that leaves no chance for, "I thought Joe was doing that." Call this committee the "Meeting-room Committee." Have him do the following:

1. Contact the speaker beforehand and find out what he needs.
2. Arrange to get what the speaker needs. If the speaker is shipping any presentation aids, the committee should receive them, care for them, and get them to the hall.
3. Meet the speaker when he arrives, show him the hall and get his suggestions for arrangement.
4. Help the speaker set up.
5. Know the facilities of the building and the porters and janitors.
6. Arrange to get any assistance the speaker needs during the meeting.
7. Help the speaker pack up. Ship back the speaker's props if that is necessary.

The contact with the speaker beforehand can be made by letter. I am sure that a meeting-room committee will surprise most guest speakers. The committee can give the speaker instructions as to where his exhibits are to be shipped. He can

arrange to pick them up at the express station, to get them to the hall on time, and to return them to the speaker.

This one-man committee can arrange to meet the speaker when he arrives and take him to the meeting room. He should show the speaker the properties he has obtained for him and ask whether or not they will do. In time this committee will come to know the meeting hall and every property that is available. He will know where tables, blackboards, easels, and the other things a speaker might use are stored. I am always surprised when I go to speak to church clubs and ask for a table or lectern. It seems that nobody knows whether or not the church owns such a piece. I wonder how these people can work around a church for any length of time and not know where everything is kept. Some churches have most elaborate meeting rooms and it is usually in this type of church that a speaker is asked to come. Yet, invariably when the speaker asks for an easel, the man he is working with says, "I think we have one, but I don't know where we keep it."

This meeting-room committee can find out if the speaker wants to be at the head table or at a place apart when he speaks. Perhaps the arrangement of the room can be changed a bit to help the speaker. It is always advisable to ask him if the room arrangement is the way he wants it. Some minor changes may help you get a better performance. This should be done beforehand, not after the guests arrive.

The committee can check on any special lighting the speaker may need for charts he has to show or for other exhibits. Will he need extension cords for his projector or for any spotlights he may bring along? If he is showing motion pictures, does he need someone to turn off the room lights and to turn them on again?

Don't wait until meeting time to meet your speaker. Many times he has quite a bit of work to do to set up his equipment and somebody should help him. I have always been surprised at the way clubs let me set up elaborate exhibits, while club

members stand around watching without offering to help. The meeting-room committee can arrive at the meeting hall early and help out with the speaking aids. Thirty minutes ahead of time would be about right for most meetings.

This meeting-room committee should be an important part of the club's contact with the guest speaker. If you give a cocktail party or a special dinner for the speaker, have the meeting-room committee as one of the hosts. Get a good man on this job, recognize his importance, and you will get better meetings.

Remember you want the speaker to be good, and he wants to be good. Don't give him any alibi. You know that if a speaker has a lot of difficulties to work under he can easily alibi a poor performance. But if you give him everything he wants, set him up as he says he wants to be, if you do everything you can for him, he'll have no alibi. Furthermore, he will do a better job.

Here are some suggestions for helping the guest speaker with this presentation aids.

1. Assign a one-man committee to help him. Call this man the "Meeting-room Committee."
2. Have this committee check with the speaker on what he needs, and have him get what the speaker needs.
3. Before meeting time, check with your meeting-room committee to be sure that the speaker has everything he wants.



## PUT THE CHAIRMAN TO WORK

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ON THE whole, most meeting chairmen don't do too well. Now don't get sore. Perhaps you are one of the ones who do the job just as well as it can be done, but as a guest speaker who has appeared before hundreds of clubs. I can say that most chairmen seem to fumble. They look upon the job as a chore that they would like to get over, and they handle it pretty much in that way.

A lot of this confusion is the program chairman's fault. Sitting at the head table, I have seen the program chairman hand the presiding officer a sheaf of paper and tell him what to do about each. That is wrong; the chairman needs preparation too. Again, sitting in that same spot, I have watched the chairman work from an outline that was completely prepared. I have also seen scripts that told him exactly what he was to do about every part of the program, even what he was to say. The men in charge of the program had taken the trouble to write out for the chairman the complete details of what he was to do.

Another idea for keeping the chairman on the beam is to get together with him beforehand and have him agree with you on what he is to do. Bring up the problems, and then let him work out his method of handling the details. This takes time, but it pays off in a smooth-running meeting.

Each of the chairmen's jobs in connection with the meeting might be covered in this preliminary outline.

When you are chairman, these suggestions may be of help to you.

Open the meeting appropriately. You contribute nothing when you start with: "Here we are again. Mr. So-and-so will now take over." Tell why Mr. So-and-so will take over. If he is the program chairman, give him a build-up on what he has done in getting this particular program together.

Give the speaker a helpful introduction. You don't contribute much when you turn the meeting over to the speaker without giving the audience some reason why Mr. Speaker should be talking to them on this subject. Try to be sincere in what you say; such introductions as, "We're unusually fortunate" or "It's my privilege—my pleasure," sound as if you are putting on. Tell them why this man is a good speaker for them to hear. A plan for such an introduction is to do the following:

1. Tell them why the subject is on the program.
2. Tell why Mr. So-and-So is the expert to talk on that subject.
3. Say why the subject is particularly important at this time.

You might give the introduction some thought and put some work on it; make it short but helpful nevertheless. If the members of the audience see that you have done some real thinking on the speaker's talk and its purpose, they can better understand why they should be there listening to him.

Don't take any of the speaker's time with an oration on your social, economic, or political views. By sounding off, you may unconsciously tear down something the speaker means to build up. Time and again you have seen a speaker come on at a luncheon-club session and try to dig himself out from under the chairman's opening remarks. The chairman didn't mean to tear down, but he did.

Never read the speaker's biographical material. Learn what you can about him and skip the rest. When you read the data, it always sounds as if you too are asking, "Who is this guy

anyway?" One way to keep on the beam with your opening remarks is to meet with the speaker beforehand to determine what you can say to be of help. No doubt, he will have some ideas. If you can't get together with him, handle the matter by correspondence. Have him give you an outline of what he would like you to emphasize. Many times one point made in the speaker's introduction sets the tempo of the meeting. Never introduce a speaker with a remark like, "Joe, can you tell us about this subject in ten minutes?" When you indicate that the subject is worth only ten minutes, you tell the audience that it isn't worth very much. If it is important that Joe limit himself to ten minutes, take him aside beforehand and inform him that you will break his neck if he runs over ten minutes, but don't mention the ten minutes before the audience.

And don't, as you bring up each speaker on the program, mention time. Don't say, "We're running behind," or "We're right on the nose on time," or "Joe didn't take his allotted time." No sense worrying the audience about the time the speakers are taking. If you keep reminding them, they will start worrying about time too.

Next time you introduce a speaker, try to do it without saying, "Without further ado. . . ." That will be difficult I know, for all chairmen seem to run out of words or suddenly realize that they have talked too long. Then out comes that hardy perennial "Without further ado." Try to skip this one, please.

When you introduce a number of speakers, don't tell the group, "This talk is particularly important." Why single out one as more important than the others. Let the speaker prove why his talk is important. Never tell a vulgar story with the speaker as a hero. Always build him up, don't tear him down. As soon as you have finished with your introduction, get out from behind the speaker. Don't sit there soaking up some of his spotlight. And don't give him the job of asking you to move out. Perhaps he doesn't know that you should not be

there behind him, attracting attention every time you move, but you know it, so move out on your own steam.

Try to remain in the meeting. Don't leave the meeting room unless it is absolutely necessary. Stay with the meeting until the end. If the members of the club see that you don't care whether or not you hear the talk or see the presentation, why should they be interested?

Pay attention to the speaker. So many times the chairman starts disturbances himself; he talks to the man on either side of him; he calls men out of the room for consultation; he goes into a rump session with the president or the secretary. Make it a rule that you will put no obstacles in the way of your speaker. Show that the meeting is important to the club by demonstrating that it is important to you.

I know you are the chairman, but don't fumble with the lecturer's props while he talks. Don't ask or offer to hold up anything unless he asks you to. He, no doubt, has practiced his presentation. You haven't practiced, and anything you try to do may look clumsy.

Help out in the discussion session. If the speaker seems to be having trouble getting questions, give him a lift. You know the men most likely to talk. Say something like, "Bill, you are an expert on this subject, what's your question here?" Many times that is all that is needed to start a lively question-and-answer period. Do your bit, and the boys may go on asking questions until the subject is exhausted.

If the questions that members ask are embarrassing to the speaker, step in and stop them. Also stop anybody who tries to make a speech. If it happens to be a question-and-answer session, you don't want somebody else sounding off with his views. As a courtesy to the guest speaker, the chairman should stop any argument a member starts, even if he agrees with the member.

Always thank the guest speaker appropriately. A good plan for such thanks is to

1. Tell why you liked the talk.
2. Mention something that he said with which all can agree.
3. Tell why the club will be helped by what he said. Don't go overboard on this thanks. Say enough, but not too much.

Here again are the suggestions for getting a better job from the chairman.

1. Give the chairman his instructions in a usable form. Don't hand him a lot of pieces of paper and ask him to do something about each.
2. Get together with him beforehand and plan what he is to do about each meeting. On weekly meetings this may be difficult, but if the meetings come once a month you could profitably spend the hour or so necessary to plan the chairman's work in detail.
3. Write out complete instructions for your chairman. This can be in outline form so that he knows what to do and the order in which each task is to be done. You might make this more complete and write out full scripts of what he is to say.

#### WHEN YOU ARE THE CHAIRMAN

1. Open the meeting in a way that makes the meeting seem important to the club members.
2. Give the speaker a helpful introduction.
3. Don't read his introduction. Try to memorize what you are to say about him.
4. Don't mention time in the introduction.
5. Try not to say, "Without further ado."
6. Get out from behind the speaker promptly and let him have his back to the wall.
7. Remain in the meeting. Don't immediately call a couple of the members of the committee and walk out of the room.
8. Pay attention to the speaker—don't hold a rump session with the secretary or someone else while the speaker tries to talk to the group.
9. Don't try to help the speaker with his properties unless he asks you to.

10. Help in the discussion if you can. If the speaker needs questions, get some of the members of the club who like to ask questions to ask questions of him.

11. Never get into an argument with the speaker. That is not your job, even though you don't agree with him let him go ahead and have his say. This is a free country.

12. If some of the members of the club seem to be asking the speaker unfair questions or taking advantage of him, step in to help the guest speaker. Remember he is a guest and he shouldn't be pushed around.

The chairman of your meeting is more than an ornament. If you go to work and give him a complete understanding of his job and then give him all the information he needs to carry on that job, you will have much better meetings. When you are chairman yourself, set a good example. These suggestions should help.

## ARE YOU SERVING FOOD?

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**I**F THIS club of yours meets at mealtime, you'll have to worry about food, and that food is important. As a guest speaker, I have never worried too much about what food would be served, but I have listened to the members talk about it. Time and again I have heard such expressions as "Let's have something besides chicken." "They have their nerve asking \$1.25 for this." Here I have been made to feel that I was the big attraction and I find myself playing second fiddle to a scrawny veal chop spattered with tomato sauce.

Then it doesn't add a thing to the guest speaker's ego to watch some of the sisters or brothers eat. I am amused and chastened too, as I watch them put it away. For when the club is eating, no guest speaker can feel too important. Most speakers before a talk don't care what they eat. But the members do; they're taking no chances. The average member probably thinks, "I better enjoy the food, the speaker may not be too hot." For that reason, you should give food plenty of attention.

Your first job is to arrange the menu. Most clubs do that pretty well. If the luncheon club meets regularly in the same place, the menu is usually agreed upon. If it is a special dinner, the club has to get suggested menus and estimates of prices. There was a time when you could go to almost any hotel and have them figure on a dinner for you. During the past few years that has been hard to do. They haven't been interested in taking your dinner and most of them have gone out of their way to prove to you that they weren't interested.

Last month I heard a chairman say, "As soon as this emergency is over, I'm going to move the club out of this hotel."

"Why do that?" asked the man next to him. "Why not stay here until they need the business. Then you can start pushing the manager around as he has been pushing you."

When you have a meal, there should always be some way of giving the eating place a count on the number of people who will be there. If the luncheon club meets regularly, you might make a standing guarantee of a certain number. This saves the trouble of handling reservation cards. If it is a special dinner held once or twice a year, a reservation card mailed with your announcement will help check the final count. Telephone reservations can be used. The members can be asked to telephone the committee chairman. A variation of this is to have the members telephone any member of the committee. Either method means work.

The arrangement of tables at your luncheon or dinner has a lot to do with the success of the speaker's talk. If it isn't customary to have a head table, it is well to seat the people at round tables and put the tables close together. If you are assigned to a large ballroom in a hotel, put the tables all at one end of the room. Don't scatter them over the room because you want to fill the space. The audience for any speaker should be as close together and as close to him as possible. With a meal to be served, you can't approach the arrangement of a theater, but with round tables you can keep people closer to the speaker.

The U-shaped table is favored at lots of luncheons, particularly for the small clubs. If the attendance is over thirty, this arrangement may put the audience too far away from the speaker. Some speakers may not like to speak from a head table and they should be asked what their preference is. If they would like to have a platform set aside so that the head table is a part of the audience, you might be able to arrange that for them. Long tables, parallel to the speaker's table, are not good



for room arrangement because one side of the table has to turn around to hear the speaker. It is better to put the long tables perpendicular to the speaker's table. Then the people at the table can look at the speaker without making a major move.

Make arrangements to get the waiters out of the room before any speaking starts. One way to do this is to watch the last tables being served and to check on how they progress with their food. You can start the meeting anytime after the last people have been served. It is a good idea to arrange a signal with the head waiter. When you give him the signal, he gets all the waiters out of the room.

This is particularly important. If the waiters are allowed to stay to clear up the tables, there will be a clatter that will interfere with any speaking. This is true even if there is a public address system in the room.

Arrange to have the speaker's table served first. Then have that table completely cleared off, particularly in front of the speaker's place. I remember one guest speaker who picked up a fork in front of him and waved that fork at the audience all through his talk. If the fork had been taken away, he would have had to wave his hand, but there he was threatening the audience with the fork. I don't believe that the man knew that he had the fork in his hand. The fork was on the table, and nervously he picked it up and went to work with it.

Another good idea is to offer your guest speaker a special lunch—he might like a fruit salad or some similar light snack. Most speakers don't like to eat a heavy lunch before they talk. But most of them won't ask for a special service. As a courtesy, ask if he would prefer something special, and offer to get it for him. Remember that stuffing a guest speaker doesn't help his effectiveness. If you give him a light lunch, he may do much better by you.

It is always a good idea to get announcements out of the way while dessert and coffee are being served. If you decide to do this, don't let your chairman announce that he is doing

it to save time for the more important part of the program. That sounds as if the announcements aren't too important. Have him make his announcements at that time, without special mention or apology. Follow this plan at a few meetings and it will become accepted by members as regular procedure.

If you are running an all-day session with a large group, instead of adjourning for lunch have a caterer bring in sandwiches, coffee, and pie. This saves time and usually makes a big hit with the members of the group. Taking a group out to a luncheon place usually crowds the place and slows up service. Almost always you can furnish the caterer-served buffet in thirty minutes. Then you are ready to go again.

Let's review these suggestions for handling the luncheon or dinner meeting.

1. Work out some method of having a count on reservations.
2. Make the best arrangement of tables you can in the room. If you are having a guest speaker, try to set up the table so that the speaker is helped by the arrangement rather than handicapped by it.
3. Arrange to have the speaker's table served first and get that table completely cleared if possible.
4. Get the waiters out of the room. Watch the last table served so that you will know when you can get started.
5. Try making announcements while dessert and coffee are being served.
6. Give the speaker a choice of his lunch. Perhaps he would like a light lunch rather than the one you are serving to the whole club.
7. If you are running a business or club committee meeting, try to eat the lunch in the meeting room. Have a caterer bring it into the room.

## MAKING NEW MEMBERS FEEL AT HOME

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WHO'S THE lonely-looking guy in the corner?" Not so long ago at a club meeting I heard a member ask that question. And it is a good question, for that lonely-looking guy is one of the biggest problems in any meeting. As the promoter, it is your job to make the club members feel at home, not some of them but all of them. The new member always has trouble breaking the ice in any club or group. And you should appoint yourself a committee of one to eliminate the lonely-looking little guys. Anything that you can do to make that new member feel at home will be helpful to the general well-being of the organization.

I have watched the membership of clubs, of those to which I have belonged and of those at which I have been a guest speaker. It's the same at all meetings. A fellow arrives and makes a beeline for his group. He has two or three cronies and they are the club to him. Perhaps they play bridge together or make a golf foursome. They greet others, of course, but not with the same warmth. There is no way you can break them up and you don't want to. Added to that, in most clubs when meeting time comes, the officers who should be doing something about the strangers in their midst have plenty to do. Thus, the newcomer doesn't get too much attention. Let's say I am a new member—I come in tonight. I know somebody—the somebody who asked me to join. If he is there, I walk over and speak to him. He introduces me to one or two. I

speak with them. At the table, at lunch or dinner, I sit with one member on either side of me and a few members near me at the table. If the meeting is in a meeting hall, I sit between two people. I can talk to either of them perhaps if they will talk to me, but still I am a stranger. When someone makes a motion, I sit there asking, "Who's that?" When the chairman seems to defer to someone, I wonder, "Why does he rate?"

And until I feel as if I belong, I will continue to ask such questions. In the small group it is much easier for the newcomer to get acquainted. And it is easier for the club to help him feel he belongs. But even in small groups it is well to have a plan to absorb the new member. In a discussion club with twenty members, it was a rule that the new member had to take a part in the discussion at the first session he attended. And since most of the discussions were gone over beforehand and rehearsed, the plan meant that the new member was thrown together with the men who put on the program, and the men came to know him. After he had taken part in the discussion, everybody knew him. They knew his name and they remembered his performance. That assignment was considered a part in his initiation. No man was a full-fledged member until he took part in his first discussion.

The same scheme can be used in almost any type of club. If the new member is given a talk to make or a part of the committee report to make, the club sees him up there before them and they have a better chance of feeling that they know him. Once a man has appeared before the club, the club is more likely to feel that he belongs.

In one club I know a new member has to get on his feet and give quite a talk on who he is and what he has done to make him worthy of membership in the club. This is a semihumorous assignment, but it breaks the ice for the new man.

Another club has an introducer, who gets together with the new member and gets all the details about his place of birth, his schooling, and so on, and then the introducer gives a talk

on the new member. He does it in a light vein, and the club gets a good picture of who the new member is. If the new man's hobby is stamp collecting, his introducer suggests that all the stamp collectors get together with him.

Another club has a committee called "The Greeters." The duty of this group is to find the lonely-looking little guy and see that he is taken care of. One of the members of the club takes him in hand and introduces him to a few of the members. Now this club realizes that it doesn't do much good to take a man by the hand and introduce him to twenty or thirty people. He can't possibly make an impression on twenty or thirty, and the twenty or thirty can't make much impression on him. The Greeter's job is to get the new member together with two or three people with whom he might hit it off. This latter consideration is important. The Greeter determines what members might have something in common with the new member and selects these members as the ones for him to meet.

Another club had a "get-acquainted" table. One man was in charge of this get-acquainted table. It was his job to grab the newcomer and sit him down with a group of members. This group of members at the get-acquainted table changed each week. The new member could sit at the get-acquainted table as long as he wanted to and thus meet a number of the members. It was found though that after three or four luncheons the new member found congenial companions and moved away with them.

Another variation of this idea is a get-acquainted committee. Such a committee should be made up of men from different groups of the club. Usually in a club of this sort the same group sits together week in week out. The committee is made up of one man from each table. A member picks up a newcomer and brings him to his table this week. The committee chairman makes up a schedule for the members and each member is notified when he is to pick up the new member. In time, through this scheme, the new member goes from table to table

and meets all of the members of the club. One advantage of this type of arrangement is that it breaks into the hard-shell groups.

Seating arrangements at luncheons or dinners can help the committee in introducing new members. Where new members are seated at a round table, the newcomer can meet anyone at the table. Where they are seated at long tables, the new member can meet but a few people. Even where the round table seats ten, the new member can talk to almost everybody at the table. However, it would be difficult for him to talk to ten people at any other type of table arrangement.

When seated in an auditorium, new members may be made to feel at home by having persons next to each other shake hands and give their names. The chairman sets up this routine. He asks the members of the audience to shake hands with their neighbors and to exchange names. Another popular scheme is to have the people in the audience respond to the chairman. He says, "Good evening, everybody." They respond, "Good evening, Mr. Hegarty." The smart chairman is never satisfied the first time, he has them say it a second and third time. By the time they have gone through this routine three times they are relaxed. This scheme might get a man talking to the persons next to him, and it helps to make him feel that he is a member of the audience.

At small-group meetings where the members are not known to each other, you can have each man stand and introduce himself and tell where he is from. The trouble with this is that many will mumble and not be heard. In asking members to give their names, explain that they are to say the name loud enough so that all can hear. Carry this idea into all question-and-answer sessions. Have the man who asks the question give his name and if it is a business meeting his business.

The badge idea used in so many clubs helps out in this. The member's badge with his name on it is right there in front of the newcomer when they shake hands. The badge idea is good

in furthering the first-name promotion. Encourage members to call newcomers by their first names. It is easier to remember first names, and a member may greet a newcomer by his first name without remembering his last name.

Another scheme is to give the newcomer a list of the members, of their businesses, and of other pertinent data. Some clubs compile complete biographical material on each member and print it in a booklet for the members.

It might be difficult to put the new member on for a speech shortly after he is made a member of the club, but it could be set up for him to lead a question-and-answer session of one of the early speakers. Also, he could be given questions to ask in a quiz program following a talk. Remember that a new member who is good on his feet makes quite an impression on the older members of the club.

This problem of making the new member feel at home is one that must be worked out with the membership of your club in mind. Any one of the suggestions given here might be used and perhaps one of them will work out for your club.

Here, let's list them again.

1. Don't try to break up the cliques. Remember people come to the club because they have friends there. The cliques help run the club, but they don't help the new member get acquainted.

2. If it is possible, give the new members some part to play on the program, a speech to make, an assignment of leading the questions and answers, or a part in a discussion.

3. Any time the new member participates, have him announce his name and any other personal data necessary.

4. Set up a committee called the "Greeter's Committee." Then work out a plan so that these people can look up the lonely ones and introduce them.

5. Try the get-acquainted table. Have a setup by which the new man is brought to this table and the members who are at this table rotate over a certain number of weeks so that he meets all of them.

6. Set up a get-acquainted committee. This committee could be organized so that one member took the new member this week, another member took the newcomer the next week, and so on.

7. Have an introduction committee. This could be a group who introduced the new man and gave the complete details about him.

8. In a large meeting you might try using the handshake routine. Have people on either side shake hands and introduce themselves.

9. Let the chairman greet the group and have them greet him by name.

10. In a small meeting have everybody stand up and tell his name and the company he works for.

11. Try the idea of printing a roster giving biographical data on each member and distribute it to the members.

12. Use a large badge with the member's name on it. Put his first name or nickname in large letters. When the members start calling the new member by his first name, he feels he belongs.

Help the new member get acquainted. Help him become a part of the club. The quicker you can do this, the sooner you have a worker.



## HOLD TO SCHEDULE

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IT is his time, and please remember that. I always laugh when the speaker takes off his watch and lays it in front of him. It always seems that he is measuring off my time, that he is determined to take that time whether or not he has anything to say. My attitude on time is typical of the man sitting in your club meeting. Your meeting takes up his time. Use the time to good advantage and it's O.K. by him. Waste some time, and he has a perfect right to complain.

Not long ago we were sitting in a meeting that had run from early morning into the afternoon. The fellow next to me kept looking at his watch on his wrist and then at the printed schedule. Finally, he leaned over to me and whispered, "We are an hour behind. We'll never make up this time."

Now that fellow wasn't running the meeting. He was just a member of the association holding the conference. He had traveled over a hundred miles to be there. The meeting was scheduled to be over by 5 P.M. and his train back home left at midnight. But the subjects had been printed on the program with the time for each and there he was worrying about whether or not the meeting was going to run overtime. He was like the fellow in jail who asked what time it was, only to be told, "What difference does it make to you, big boy? You're not going any place!"

For most meetings there is no printed schedule for the members, and I believe that is a good idea. Time is your concern, not theirs. But you should have a schedule for yourself. Study

what you have to do in the meeting, and then write down the list of subjects you have to cover. Assign a time to each. While such a schedule is important when others will take part in the meeting with you, do the same thing for any meeting you put on without help. Leave some time for each detail, for any announcements that must be made, for introductions of people at the speaker's table, and for introductions of guests or out-of-town members. Leave time for applause. All these details take time. There never was a meeting that had a complaint of "Too little, too late." It is always too much in too little time.

With the luncheon meeting that has a guest speaker there are always too many outside announcements. The other day an editor of a magazine said, "If I printed all the stuff they ask me to print, on war bonds, on scrap paper, and on a million other subjects, I would not have enough room for the material that my magazine is supposed to carry." It is the same with most club meetings. The chairman of this committee wants an announcement, another member wants to make a report, and another thinks he ought to take a few minutes to tell about his pet charity. You have to recognize all of them, but try to keep your meeting from being cluttered up with too many details.

One way to assign time to your extras, if you have a guest speaker, is to make a schedule that first gives him the time he should have. Then figure out how much time you have left and parcel it out. If you do not have time for all the extras, cut out some of them. Let them wait for the next meeting, or put them in a printed announcement; but don't cut into your speaker's time with a lot of announcements that aren't of particular importance to every member. You can handle this by having the announcements made while the luncheon is being served. This eliminates one of the difficulties of announcements running overtime. For example, you may assign a chairman three minutes for an announcement. He stays

within that time in his remarks, but a question is asked and he must explain. Perhaps that brings other questions, and your precious time is being eaten up. If you break in to stop the discussion, the members may resent your action. By putting on the announcements during the time of serving the meal, you can let them run overtime without upsetting the speaker's schedule. One club I know has what it calls "the fruit-cup" announcement, the "entree" announcement, and the "dessert" announcement. Such announcements are made during the course mentioned. Since the announcement time is given a special name, the member feels he is given a special privilege when he gets one of the named spots.

Without a doubt you can start on time. If you call your session for seven o'clock, start it at seven o'clock. This is particularly important in a series of sessions. Don't wait for the late comers or the stragglers. If you don't start on time at your first meeting, you will find more than one of your audience straggling in at a later meeting. Let them miss a portion of that first or second session and they will be on time for later ones.

Remember it is your members' time. How do you think the fellow feels who took the trouble to get there on time and must sit waiting fifteen or thirty minutes for those who did not pay any attention to the starting time? This is one of the common faults of the membership of most clubs. We don't feel that the announced starting time means anything. When our club says eight o'clock we don't feel that they mean eight o'clock. But if the club makes a practice of starting on time and the members miss a portion of the meeting because they didn't take the trouble to get in on time, they will be there on time at subsequent meetings without fail.

Somehow it seems that meetings wait for almost any excuse. Not long ago I was scheduled to speak before an association. My spot was first in the morning, at 9:30 A.M. When I came into the hall at five minutes before the time I was to go on, it was empty. The chairman hadn't shown up nor had the sec-

retary. I waited around for about thirty minutes and the secretary arrived. He explained that the meetings never started on time. That morning we waited forty-five minutes for a sizable crowd to show up. Then with about 50 of 300 in the hall we started, but within five minutes after I started to talk the hall was filled. It was as if the crowd was waiting in the bar until the shindig began, and then, like flies, they swarmed into the meeting room. I am fairly sure that had that meeting started on time, the crowd would have been there; but they knew from experience that the association did not start its meetings on time, so what was the sense of getting up a little early to be there.

After the meeting has started, try to keep it on time, but don't worry the audience about time. A secretary or chairman can do that. Not long ago while I was talking to a meeting, I noticed the secretary glancing at his watch on his wrist every few minutes. He was sitting where the group could see him too. At another meeting recently every speaker mentioned time, not once, but a number of times. Each kept worrying about the time he was taking or about the time he would give to a certain subject or the way he had to rush through points of interest. Just to show you how such mentions can give the audience the impression that the meeting is put to a rush to get through, here are some mentions of time that were made in that one-day meeting:

"I am not going to do it because it would take plenty of time if I did." . . . "One other thing and I will close, since I am running out of time." . . . "With your permission, we won't spend too much time on it." . . . "Briefly, run through." . . . "Now we will study for just a few minutes." . . . "Bear with me for a while." . . . "I'll bring you up to date quickly." . . . "Utilize a portion of the time I have." . . . "I'll whip through it quickly." . . . "We'll take about ten minutes to tell you about this subject." . . . "They gave me ten minutes to cover this subject." . . . "I could give you a

lot more examples, but I don't have the time." . . . "Just let me take time." . . . "I'm going to touch on that a little bit." . . . "Right on schedule." . . . "We'll now have a recess—we are running exactly on time." . . . "I won't cover all for it would take too much time." . . . "I hope I'm not taking too much time." . . . "I'm going to conclude in just a short time."

The chairman started this mention of time when he announced that the first two speakers had taken too much time. After that, every speaker was rushing to get through. He was proving it by the speed with which he covered his points, and his apologies for his speed kept the audience continually aware of the time.

Perhaps you want to print a time schedule of your meeting to pass out to those in attendance, but don't pass out such a schedule unless it will be of help to the group. If sessions are to run a full day, such a schedule may be useful. One trouble with schedules is that some men will read the schedule and say, "I am not interested in that subject from 2 to 3 P.M. I'll duck out when that is on." And you know that the fellow who isn't interested may take with him a fellow who is. Still if you feel that a schedule will be of help, print it and hand it out. Many times such schedules are used in the initial promotion of a meeting. They show the speakers you will have and list the different discussions. Perhaps such advertising helps build the attendance but I have always wondered whether those schedules might not be just as much a hindrance as a help. Many times I have looked at a schedule and thought that it wouldn't be of much interest to me. When I have attended the meeting, I have often found that the subject which didn't look interesting proved to be one in which I had a real interest. So consider the printing of the schedule carefully. Don't do it solely because it is the custom. When you have a number of speakers on the program, you must have a schedule for them. Each man should know the time he has, and you should impress on each

speaker that this time assignment is important, that he must stay within his time. One way to keep speakers on the beam is to have a time signal. When the speaker is within five minutes of his time allotment, signal to him. Some chairmen use a gong for this, but that is rough treatment. A silent signal is just as effective.

End your meeting on time. End when you say you will end. Remember you promised these people that you would end at a certain time; and therefore end at that time. Don't run over or they may feel that you are imposing on them.

Programming can help you end on time. If you have an hour when you have to quit, try to set it up so that the guest speaker is not on last. Lots of times it is difficult to cut in on the guest speaker and stop him. However, if you have your club activity announcements after the guest speaker, you can cut in on them at any time. Usually it is not the guest speaker's fault that you have to end at two o'clock. That is a club matter and you can cut off any member because he knows the rule. Try then in planning your schedule to put some of the members on last. This will help you in closing on the nose.

The schedule is important in any meeting, even one in which you are the chairman, main speaker, and everything else. Write out the schedule, and try to stick to it. Here are some suggestions as to how you might do that.

1. Figure beforehand how much time you need.
2. Set your schedule and stick to it.
3. Start at the time you say you will start.
4. If it will help, give a schedule of your subjects in the opening remarks. Say we'll cover this and this and this.
5. End when you say you will end.
6. Work out a method of checking on time that isn't too apparent to the audience.
7. Use a time signal to tell your speakers they are running out of time.

8. Don't sit where you can be seen and glance at the watch on your wrist every few minutes.

9. Don't give the audience a choice in making the schedule. Time and again you have heard the chairman say, "It will take us 20 minutes to cover this subject; shall we cover it or will we adjourn now?" That is poor management. You are running the meeting. When you ask the audience, some want to hear the subject, others want to go home, and your question adds nothing but confusion.

10. Don't reject any of these suggestions in speeding up your meetings because your club has never done it that way. If you feel any idea might work, try it. Try only one idea at a time. If you spring too many new ideas at once, the members may feel you are trying to make them over.

Maybe you can't do all you would like to do about holding to a schedule, but you can start on time and you can close on time. Your membership will appreciate anything you can do to cut the waste motion out of your meetings.

## KEEPING THE MEETING MOVING

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I ATTEND a lot of club meetings and I find in many cases that the people who run them don't seem to know what they are going to do next. There seems to be no organized management of the meeting. As a guest speaker, I hear a lot of the discussions that go on between the chairman and the program committee. It's all too apparent that the chairman and the program committee have not agreed beforehand on how the program should be run.

Recently the president of a club at which I was a guest speaker confided, "That guy is always trying to put me on the spot." "That guy" was his program chairman. Imagine that! Is it necessary to say that that particular meeting stumbled along?

Then at other clubs you see an operation in which everybody concerned with the management knows exactly what is going to happen and the events run off as planned, right on schedule. The member gets the impression that his club is well managed. The guest speaker gets an impression that these people have a live, wide-awake club. And that is because everybody concerned with the management works as a team.

You should always try to have a meeting that moves, a meeting that seems to give the right time to each subject, a meeting that does not give the club members the impression that it is a rush to get through. You want a meeting that seems to waste no time. But you want movement without the appearance of hurry. Let's talk about how that can be achieved.



First, get your subjects in order, and then cover them in order. Handle them in the order that you have agreed on. Don't hesitate after you have started, but keep on that program until you finish.

If it is a discussion, get the discussion organized, and keep it moving. Don't let it piddle out or lag. When interest seems to fade, stop it. If the discussion is to be put on by a group of people from the club, get them to rehearse. If the discussion takes the form of a debate, it is advisable to get the people together, even though they are to cover different sides of the subject, and discuss the way the debate is to be put on. Where exhibits are to be shown, get these set up beforehand, and work out a plan that avoids confusion. A guest speaker may be lax about setting up exhibits in advance. In such a case you should step in and try to get him to set up before he starts. Always ask your guest speaker, "Do you have everything ready?" If he has to have a projector for showing films, get the projector set up before the meeting. Don't stop the meeting to arrange the projector or move the crowd to place a blackboard. These are the things that slow up a meeting and make the audience feel that the club management is fumbling.

Don't allow the meeting to wait for anything. If the guest speaker is arriving late, plan something to fill in while you wait for him, but don't tell the audience by the way you handle the pause that it is a fill-in. Not so long ago I was sitting in a meeting that had stopped. I asked the man running the meeting, "Why is the meeting stopped?"

"We are waiting for a delegation from Springfield," he said. "They are due in the bus station in ten minutes."

Now that was wrong, making the people in that room wait until the brothers from a near-by town showed up. He should have kept right on with his meeting in some way. These people from out of town were interested in only the second part of the program, but even so the meeting would have been better

managed if that waiting time had been filled up with questions and answers or a discussion session.

One thing that slows up most meetings is the chairman's speech of introduction. Usually he is working from notes with which he is not too familiar and he does not do too good a job. Another great "slower up" is the chairman who pops up between the talks to introduce the next speaker. You can cut this time and speed up the meeting if you have the speaker who is finishing introduce the speaker who follows him.

The minutes of the last meeting are one of the most deadly brakes you can put on your meeting. Very few people care for those minutes. Don't read them unless it is absolutely necessary. It is the same with most reports. When you have reports to give or want somebody to plug the annual picnic, select a man of few words. When someone imposes upon you and wants to talk about his pet cause, ask the member to make it short. If you can, ask him to submit a script of what he is to say. I don't know why it is, but it seems that most people with pet causes are usually unable to interest you in their causes. You might get around this by asking the bore to work with you on a presentation that you think will appeal to the club. Then get it into fewer words and be sure to have him tell the club what they will get out of it if they do what he wants them to do.

Asking for questions is another way to slow up the meeting. You ask for questions and attention goes right over the hill. Bill has no question and neither has Pete, so Bill asks, "Hear the one about the pigeons?" And they are off. If you want questions, have the questions ready. You can do this by contacting the speaker beforehand and asking him to give you the questions he wants asked. Then spot these questions with members so that as soon as questions are asked for, one of them is asked.

You can slow up your meeting by audience participation if

you don't organize that participation. The minute the discussion starts to drag, chop it off and go on with the next subject.

Movement, however, is not the only consideration. The meeting may move too rapidly. Not long ago a national officer had come to tell a local club about one of the organization's activities. He had a script and a set of charts. He laid his script on the table, he put on his spectacles, and he said, "I've got to catch a train at 4:30 P.M. and the only way I can get through this material is to read it."

With that the representative started to read rapidly and turn his charts while the club membership went to sleep. Every now and then he seemed to speed up. He kept his meeting moving all right, but he didn't sell any part of his plan to the local club. From the first statement, his meeting seemed to rush to get through.

Over at the railroad station, as we waited for the train, I asked, "What do you think the members got out of that reading?"

"Little," he admitted.

"Then why did you read it so fast? Why not take the time you needed and then take the midnight train?"

"I couldn't make the schedule that headquarters had set up if I did that," he replied.

Here the schedule was his concern; he wasn't thinking about what the club got out of his presentation.

Usually when the meeting drags, it is the fault of the people running the meeting. If the club management fumbles in handling its meeting, the meeting won't seem to be on its toes. Remember that the members are proud to belong to a club that is live and wide-awake. Remember, also, that the only impression most members have of their clubs is the meetings the club holds. So keep the meeting moving and you'll keep the members enthusiastic.

Here again are some suggestions for keeping the meeting moving.

1. Arrange the events in order, and then stick to that order.
2. Organize every discussion. If it is an elaborate discussion, a rehearsal may be in order.
3. Try to streamline the minutes and reports. Maybe you can help the people who must read reports to cut the barnacles from their presentations.
4. Never make a meeting wait. If the speaker is coming up from the bus station, do something to fill in, but don't admit that you are filling in. Give the impression that you planned it that way.
5. If you have a number of speakers, try to relieve the chairman of the problem of bobbing up between every speaker with a new introduction. Have the man ahead introduce the man who follows him.
6. If you have any audience participation, organize it. Spot the questions in the audience or tip off men beforehand what you want them to do.
7. If the pleaders for special causes should have time, try to organize their presentations, so that they don't worry the group.
8. Don't try to speed the meeting so fast that the audience gets the impression that you are rushing to get through. Make your meeting move without apparent effort.

## PERHAPS A RECESS

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THE OTHER day in a meeting one of the group called to the chairman, "How about a recess?" A recess was on the schedule, but the meeting was running overtime and the chairman had passed up the pause. Still one man knew his rights and the recess was called.

That recess is important. When you are in a meeting that runs for half a day or longer, the recess helps keep the audience awake. It brings them back. It freshens them up. It is mighty easy to fall asleep in an all-day meeting. There comes a spot in the middle of the morning when you can't take any more. It is the same in the middle of the afternoon, particularly after a heavy lunch.

Remember when you are acting as the stage manager of a meeting, you are active—thinking about the next speaker, the exhibits, and the lunch. You may be up and down checking details, but the club member is sitting there on a hard seat, his only activity—breathing, perhaps smoking. As time goes on, the seat gets more uncomfortable and the air gets worse. There's a true saying about meetings that goes, "Your mind can take only as much as your sitting-down place can stand." One grizzled club veteran told me not long ago, "Sittin' in a meeting is the hardest work a man does."

You have been at sessions yourself and know what a great relief it is to get up off a hard seat even for a few minutes. Not long ago at a meeting, I was sitting next to a man who came

next on the program. At the end of the talk, a talk that moved rather slowly, the chairman called a recess. The next speaker turned to me and said, "Boy, is that a break for me!" He meant that he would have an audience refreshed and awake, instead of a group that had been lulled to sleep by the previous speaker.

Even though you have to tack the time on to the end of your session, it pays to give the audience a breathing spell. Schools recognize this with the recess or the time needed to go from room to room for the next class. When you call a recess, keep it to the time you say. If you say five minutes, get going in five minutes. Don't stall or drag. Get your listeners seated when you say you will and go on with the session. With a large crowd the five-minute recess is a joke. You can't get them out of their seats in five minutes or back in five. If the crowd is large, give them fifteen or twenty minutes.

With a large crowd, appoint members of the Boy Scouts to help you get the audience seated quickly when recess ends. If you give twenty minutes, place your Scouts near each of the entrances and at the end of fifteen minutes have them start calling, "Take your seats please." A cowbell, fire gong, or the public address system can be used in this reassembling.

Don't discuss the recess with the audience or ask their opinion. Give it to them when it comes on your program, just as you planned. No doubt you have heard the chairman announce, "We had a recess scheduled at this time, but if we pass it up, we can go right on and finish up on schedule. What do you want to do?"

Such a question causes only confusion. Some members of the group want to skip the recess, others don't, so what can they say? Don't confuse the group by such a question. It is your meeting, run it your way—the way you planned it.

If the subject matter is difficult to absorb, cut the time between recesses. If the speakers are dull, or the presentations too much alike, if the air in the room is bad, or it is an uncom-

fortably hot day, have more recesses. Watch your audience for the time of recesses. Whenever they seem to tire, call a recess.

One way to make the recesses more interesting is to run in a Coca-Cola cooler during the recess and let everybody enjoy the pause that refreshes. Another way is to serve coffee or tea. I have seen both done in all-day meetings with real success.

At times it is a good idea to have a recess shortly before the closing of the meeting. About ten or fifteen minutes before the meeting closes, call a recess. This will freshen up the group for the finale of the meeting. If you plan in the finale of your meeting to give them some work to do, this before-closing recess is important. When the group returns to the room, they will be fresher for your final instructions.

The seventh-inning stretch at the ball game is a good idea that you can profitably use. In the ball park the seats get hard, but the spectators are out in the open where they have all the fresh air they want. How much more important is that stretch in a room filled with smoke and stale secondhand air. Make the recess a part of your meeting and ring the bell as often as it is needed.

Here again are some suggestions for recesses.

1. Give recesses when they are scheduled on the program and when they are needed whether scheduled or not.
2. Don't ask the audience whether or not they would like a recess now. Remember you are running the meeting.
3. Try running in a soft-drink cooler and serving a drink or try serving some coffee or tea at a recess.
4. If the recess is for five minutes, get started promptly at the end of five minutes. Don't let the recess drag.
5. Don't call a short recess for a large crowd. Estimate the time it will take you to get them seated again.
6. Appoint a number of helpers to help get the group seated quickly. Use mechanical aids such as cowbells or the public address system.

7. Space your recesses according to the difficulty of absorbing your subject matter, the deadliness of your speakers, and the air in the room. If the audience seems tired, bring in the pauses more often.

8. It is sometimes a good idea to hold a recess ten or fifteen minutes before you close the meeting. Then you can give the information in the last few minutes of the meeting to an audience that is much fresher than the one that has been tired out from listening for a long time.



## HANDLING DISTURBANCES

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THERE ARE three kinds of disturbances you have to worry about in your meeting—those you start yourself—those from the audiences—and those from outside.

The other day at a meeting the secretary finished his opening announcement, and then as the chairman of the meeting prepared to start a discussion session the secretary began to pass out a piece of printed matter that gave biographical sketches of members of the group. While the chairman introduced the speaker, the secretary and two assistants passed out these printed sketches. Naturally, nobody paid much attention to what the chairman was saying. They were anxious to get the inner facts on where each man was born, if at all, where he had gone to school, if any, and all such details. After the secretary saw what was happening he realized his mistake and asked the group to put away the pieces, but the damage had been done.

That kind of disturbance is common in meetings. Time and again I have seen the chairman or the secretary set up a disturbance that bothers the guest speaker or hinders the progress of the meeting. When you are running a meeting, watch such details.

When you run a meeting, always protect your guest speaker. If some member of the club starts to argue with him, it is your job to shush that club member if the guest speaker needs your help. Many times the guest speaker can take care of himself by suggesting that the disturber get together with the speaker

after the meeting and discuss the question. Such a suggestion will stop most such pests. However, if your club member persists, it is up to you to protect this man who is your guest. Also, if the guest speaker doesn't seem to be able to handle it himself, chip in with some such statement as: "I am sure that Mr. B, the guest speaker, will be glad to discuss that matter after the meeting is over."

If that won't stop your pest, then you should have some member of the club see that the fellow gets out of the room. Usually, a man who is sober can be handled easily this way. If the man is under the influence, then you may have some trouble and that is the time when you need your bouncer who can move the man out of the room without knocking over any chairs. Such disturbances are rare, but you do have the responsibility. The guest speaker is there as your guest and if he can't handle the situation himself you have to protect him.

Sometimes the arrangement of the room makes these disturbances. Not long ago I appeared at a dinner meeting where the head table ran the length of the room. There was a table down beyond the end of the head table, perhaps forty feet away, at which some members were seated. I was using a set of charts and the men at this table could not see my charts.

Along in the middle of my speech I heard quite a bit of talking. I looked down at the last table and saw that the fellows seated there were matching quarters. I didn't care if this gang didn't want to listen to me, but the noise they made was bothering everybody else in that end of the room. Now I know how to stop such a disturbance. I stopped them by telling a story. That story had to do with another meeting at which I was a guest speaker. It was held in an open-air pavilion and a drunk was in the audience. As the speakers before me talked, the drunk would break in with such expressions as: "This guy is lousy." "Where did they get this guy?" "Who's brother-in-law is he?"

The speakers preceding me would glare at the drunk and go on speaking. Nobody did anything to silence him.

When I got to my feet, I decided that this fellow would not bother me, so from the start I talked to him. I forgot the sober part of the audience and put everything I had into making that drunk listen. Before long I had his head up a few inches off the table. I had him looking; I had him listening; I had him quiet. When I finished my talk, I shall never forget how he mumbled as he applauded, "This guy is good."

I told the story of the drunk at this meeting and it quieted the fellows who were matching quarters. I could stop them because I knew how. But all guest speakers won't know how to do that. The next day at lunch a fellow who had attended the meeting said, "You handled those fellows cleverly. After your story, they were as quiet as anybody else."

In this particular case I happened to notice this table at dinnertime. I knew they couldn't see my charts, and therefore I asked the chairman to move the table. He went down and asked the men to move. They stayed put. The result was a disturbance.

Now that disturbance was the fault of the chairman. He should have had the waiter move that table out after the dinner was finished. Then the men would have moved to other tables where they could see the charts and be part of the meeting.

At another meeting I was sitting in the front row with the chairman listening to a speaker talking from the stage. In the middle of the speaker's talk I heard a thundering noise. I asked what it was and the chairman told me, "The boys in the back are stamping their feet."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because they can't hear."

Well, it was pitiful. The speaker kept right on talking and the stamping kept right on. He tried to drown out the stamping, the stampers tried to drown out his words. And you know who won.

But the chairman had been around. When he got up to introduce the next speaker, he asked the group, "You fellows want to stamp your feet?"

They shouted that they did. The chairman said, "O.K. let's get this organized." With that he said, "Come on now we will stamp with our right foot," and he stood on the stage leading the procedure. First he had them stamp the right foot five or six times then the left foot five or six times and then he asked for both feet at the same time and he jumped up and down on the stage in unison with them.

When he had finished he said, "Now let's be quiet while the next speaker comes on."

When he got back beside me he said, "It is my fault that they stamped their feet in the first place. The acoustics in this hall are bad. I should have told Joe to speak louder."

Another cause for disturbance in meetings is a fellow who is inclined to argue. In a question-and-answer session he may start an argument with the guest speaker about some simple point such as whether or not you use the right or left hand for some task. Most such arguers dive in for the sake of an argument. They are not trying to get information; they just love to argue.

The guest speaker can handle a fellow like this by saying, "Listen brother, you are a man right down my alley. If you will just stick around after the meeting you and I can go into this far into the night." But if the guest speaker does not have the knack of doing this, you will have to step in and help him out.

The talkers may cause your guest speaker some trouble. Through the speech the talker talks to the fellow next to him. Sometimes the speaker can stop these people, but usually he makes them feel bad when he does it. Not long ago I heard a man who silenced two talkers who were pretty much in the front of the room where everybody else could see them by stopping his speech and saying, "please."

Many of the group did not know what he meant, but the

talkers knew and stopped. I have seen a speaker quiet the talkers by stopping and letting the silence stop them. I have seen the chairman send a card to the talker telling him that he is wanted outside the room. This breaks up the talking and does it most effectively. If talkers bother your guest speaker, you have to silence them.

If you get an outside noise that bothers your meeting, do your best to stop it. If you are meeting in a hotel or other place and they have noises near by, try to get your meeting room moved. Noises from outside can't be helped too much. You can close the windows or stop your meeting while the noise is the loudest. One time I ran a meeting while a Flag Day parade was passing a block away. Every time a band came the room filled with the sound of the band and I couldn't carry on my meeting. All I could do was to stop and help the group and listen to the band.

Try to eliminate any disturbances that might be made by waiters or employees coming into the room or by people being called out to answer the telephone. These should be handled in some way so that they do not disturb the meeting. As has been suggested before, clear out all the waiters before the meeting starts. If somebody has to be called out of the room, arrange for one man to do it. Don't have somebody's secretary walk into the room and start looking for someone. Post one man near the door to pick up the messages. If the message can wait until the recess, have it wait. Don't break into the meeting to pass out a message.

Always the chairman should be on the lookout for any exodus that might interfere with the meeting. If it looks as if the boys might be on their way to the bar as the next speaker starts, or if it looks as if they are restless, do something to hold them until he is finished.

One way to do this is to give a strong selling plug to the speaker who is coming on. Another is to schedule something behind this speaker who might not be too hot. Put some big

attraction last and you will hold them until the end. They will sit through the duller parts of your meeting to hear the big attraction.

Here then is a review of these suggestions for handling disturbances in your meeting:

1. Don't set up a disturbance yourself by passing out anything for the audience to look at while the guest speaker goes on with the meeting.
2. If a disturbance starts that the guest speaker is not capable of handling, do what you can to help out.
3. One way to avoid disturbances is to be sure that all can see and hear. If they can't see or they can't hear, they are more likely to do something on their own.
4. Work out some plan of taking care of the talkers. One way to do it is to pass one of them a note that he is wanted outside.
5. Watch the arguer. If someone wants to argue with the guest speaker, work out a technique of postponing the argument until after the meeting.
6. Try to get a location for your meetings where you will have little noise interference from outside. If you are in a hotel room and other hotel noises bother you, speak to the management about it.
7. Work out a scheme to stop the disturbances created by waiters or employees.
8. Towards the end of the program when the crowd is likely to run out on the speaker, work out some plan to stop the exodus. You might make a talk about the quality of the next speaker, or indicate that you are going to announce something important after the next speaker has finished.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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THE OTHER day in a meeting, the speaker had finished his prepared talk; the chairman had asked for questions, and the questions were coming thick and fast. The man sitting next to me said, "Boy, this is better than the talk."

And that is true in so many meetings. The question-and-answer session is better than the prepared talk. There is a good reason for that. So many speakers write their talks and their written language is not their spoken language. The talk they write is stiff and formal and stilted. Their spoken language is natural. The fellow in his talk may write, "let us" and "cannot." When he answers questions, he says "let's" and "can't" and it makes all the difference.

But here's a tip if you want questions in your meeting. If you organize to get questions, you will get them. If you don't organize, you may not get them. Some subjects are so live that they will beget questions. Others are dead and they won't get the questions you want.

One way to do this is to get the questions from the guest speaker. Write him ahead of time and find out what questions he wants asked. If he wants questions, he knows which ones he wants asked. Usually the questions he submits will emphasize the points on which he wants emphasis. Thus, if you get him to give you the list of questions he wants asked, you will have a good question-and-answer session, one that is satisfactory to both audience and speaker. And it is this organization that makes the members of your club comment as the one did above.

There are a number of ways to organize questions and answers. Let's discuss a few of them.

#### QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

This is the simplest form of question-and-answer session. The speaker finishes his prepared talk. Then he or the chairman asks, "Have you any questions?" One rule to follow in this type of question-and-answer session is to repeat the question so that everybody in the room can hear. This can be done by the chairman or by the speaker. Remember that some of the questions are asked by people in the front row. The speaker and chairman may hear them, but the men in the back row may not. The repetition also gives the questioner the chance to say whether or not that is his question. If the chairman repeats the question, the speaker has some time to form an intelligent answer.

The other day I was attending a session at one of our schools. The people from the floor were asking questions and always the speaker would attempt to answer without repeating the question. The man who was running the meeting did his best to get the questions repeated, but he should have taken over the question-and-answer period himself. Then he could have been sure that all questions were repeated for all to hear.

#### THE SHILL QUESTIONS

These questions are handed out to a number of members. The speaker finishes his talk just as before and he or the chairman asks for questions. Then the prepared questions are asked by the men to whom they were assigned. This gets the questioning started and it has the advantages mentioned before in that it gets the questions asked that the speaker wants to have asked. Many times an audience is slow to start asking questions, but if a few prepared questions are asked, others will follow by the score. If you are using prepared questions, caution the man who has been given a question not to read it from a card.



Have him ask it in his own words, even though he doesn't get the wording exactly right.

#### QUESTIONS BY THE GUEST SPEAKER

It is seldom that you will have this type of session in a club meeting, but it does have possibilities. The speaker can ask his question and assign it in the order of seating, or he can put his question and ask, "Who wants to answer that one?" After the audience member has answered, even though he is correct, the speaker can give a prepared answer. This gives the answer twice without repetition.

#### THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Many times the guest speaker may want to check on the club's reception of a talk. Here a questionnaire can be handed out which the audience checks. Usually on this it is well to use a true-or-false type of questionnaire. While this gives the members of the club a chance to guess, it does make the task easier for them.

#### CARD QUIZ

An interesting session can be built by giving or having each member of the club draw a card on which the question is written. At the proper time, the man asks the question. The speaker answers it. In a discussion session this type of quiz may be organized so that the man who gets the question can answer it himself. If not, any other man in the discussion group can answer. A variation of this type of quiz program is to let the man ask the question he drew of any other member he selects. If the man answers, the questioner might pay him a forfeit. If the man can't answer, he might pay the questioner a forfeit or put some small amount in the pool.

## REWARDS

In certain types of discussion quiz meetings a lot of amusement can be had by rewards or forfeits. The group can all chip in a certain amount of money to make a pool at the start of the session. Then as questions are brought up and answered, the man who answers draws a certain amount of money out of the pool. If the man fails to answer the question, he has to pay a forfeit. All sorts of possibilities are offered in this type of question-and-answer period.

## THE QUESTION CONTEST

You can run a quiz bee for your club and it will make an excellent program. This can be run in a number of ways. All you need is a judge, a set of questions and answers on events of the day, a scheme for drawing questions, and the members to answer them. You can run it like a spelling class and use the system of spelling down. If a member fails to answer, he goes to the foot of the class, and starts to work his way up. Prizes could be given for the first three or the first five. In this type of meeting when a man fails on a question, you can add interest by having everybody chant, "Go to the foot of the class."

The quiz bee can be staged with one group competing with other groups. Appoint two captains and have these men choose teams. Get a baseball bat at the dime store and have the captains choose up just as they would in a scrub baseball game. Teams should be selected fairly and be as evenly matched as possible.

At such a meeting, the system of drawing questions must seem fair to the contestants. If possible, a contestant should draw his own questions, so that if he gets a question that is rather difficult to answer he blames his luck and not the judge. The question drawn is then asked by the judge of the man who drew the question. If he answers correctly, his side scores. If he fails to answer the question, it is given to the man on the other side. If the man on the second team fails to answer the

question, the question goes to the next man on the first team, and so on.

Scores can be kept by points in an infinite variety of ways. The simplest method, of course, is to give the same number of points for each correct answer. This can be varied by bonuses and penalties. For instance, if a man answers a question correctly on the first try, his side can be given ten points. If it is answered correctly by another man on the same side on the second try, it can count seven points. If one side fails to answer the question and the other side answers it, they may get twelve points. The scoring can also be set up so that the scores count only when one side answers the question that the other side has failed to answer. When the scoring system is used, scores should be posted as made, so that each side knows where it stands at all times. Watch your scoring system in any such contests. Make it one the contestants understand.

If you plan to stage a quiz bee, you might give out a complete list of questions beforehand so that the men will have a chance to study the answers. All questions should be ones that can easily be answered. Trick questions should be avoided because the man who fails to answer a trick question feels that he hasn't been treated fairly.

The judge who runs the contest should keep things moving. He should stop squabbles the minute they start and he should be the sole judge as to whether or not an answer is correct.

In setting up a quiz bee, here are some suggestions to follow:

1. Pass out questions in a way that seems fair to all. You might let the men vote on how to do it.
2. Make certain that all contestants understand the rules.
3. Be sure, if there is a scoring scheme used, that it is understood by all.
4. See that the judge keeps things moving, settles squabbles immediately, and cuts down the horseplay.

5. Equip the judge with a set of correct answers so that in case of a dispute he can read them. If there is a dispute over an answer, let the group vote over whether or not it is correct.

6. Give a complete set of questions to all contestants a week ahead.

7. Try for variety and fun in staging such a contest, but don't clown it too much.

#### RADIO PROGRAM IDEAS

There are a lot of quiz programs on the radio that could be imitated in building an interesting club meeting. These are, to name a few, "Information Please," "Ask It Basket," "Professor Quiz," "Doctor I. Q.," "Take It Or Leave It," and "Battle of the Sexes."

If you plan to stage any type of meeting like this, get the procedure completely by listening to the radio program a number of times and adapting the program to fit your particular group.

Here is a résumé of the most important suggestions on the question-and-answer session.

1. When you want questions, organize to get them. Have the club members ready with the questions when the period starts.

2. Don't let one or a few individuals ask all questions. If you are taking the questions from the floor, recognize different people.

3. Keep questions practical and rule out any trick questions.

4. Repeat any question which is asked so that everybody in the audience hears it.

5. Repeat any answer that is given by a member of the group so that everyone in the audience hears it.

6. If you put on a quiz contest, make sure the contestants understand the rules and scoring.

7. Try for variety and fun in staging any quiz contest, but don't make too much of a clowning operation out of it.

## THE COMMITTEE MEETING

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So you are chairman of the committee. Let's say you are the patsy selected to head a committee to get this particular job done. The committee is to study Project B. How will you get going? Well, here is a plan.

### ORGANIZE YOUR MEETING

First, get a definition of your duties. How far are you to go? Can you make any arrangements that bind the club? Or is it your job to study and report back? If the club is looking for a new hall in which to meet, are you given authority to select the hall and to sign a lease, or do you simply survey the halls available and report back that certain places are available and give a description of those places? Get a definite statement from the president of exactly what your committee is to do and how far you can go.

Second, you make up an agenda. That's just a big word for a list of the points you will discuss at your committee meeting. Write the title "Agenda for Committee Meeting on Project B" at the top of the sheet and then under the title list the points that you feel you should discuss at your committee meeting. You can list most of these points under the following headings:

1. What Project B is.
2. What it does for the club.
3. How the club will handle the project.

Under each heading you may have a number of points. But when you have them all listed, you have your agenda. And that agenda will be the outline of the discussion at your committee meeting.

Third, if you want to be known as a wise committee chairman, send your agenda to the other committee members before the first meeting. Tell them to look it over and give you any thoughts they have as to what should be added or what should be left out. Handle this in a spirit of apology. Somebody had to make up the agenda and you are taking first try at it. Don't indicate that your agenda is in any way complete. Urge them to add or subtract. If they are like most committee members, they won't have too many ideas. Most members will tell you that what you have looks pretty good.

Fourth, telephone the members you haven't heard from, and ask them what they think of the agenda, and ask for suggestions. Some of the members operate a good office and they'll get your agenda back to you with any thoughts they have quickly. Others will stick it in their pockets and think they are supposed to talk about it at meeting time. Telephone the latter and make sure that you have all suggestions before you go into the committee meeting. You don't want an argument about what you should discuss at the meeting.

#### THE MEETING

Now comes your meeting. When the group is around the conference table, open the meeting and take up the subjects in order.

As a committee chairman, you have a number of duties:

1. You should start the discussion, and bring up the points on the agenda in order.
2. You should keep the discussion on the subject that is being discussed. Don't allow the group to bear off to another point of the agenda. Keep on the main track.

3. Make sure that each point is discussed adequately. Don't spend too much time on any one point.
4. Sum up the points made under each heading. Sift out conclusions.
5. Get an agreement from the group on the conclusions and the recommendations the committee should make.

#### ASSIGNMENT OF WORK TO MEMBERS

If the committee is for a job like the annual dinner dance, you usually have members who have handled a certain job each year. After each job has been discussed and agreed upon, you assign it. Assign the music and entertainment to one member, and make a note of the assignment; then assign the hall and the menu to another member, and again make a note of it. As the chairman of such a committee you might take no job yourself except the big one of checking to see that each assignment is being handled. If you have a large general committee you might appoint subcommittees to handle different assignments. On such a committee you could do little but act as the over-all head checking on each subcommittee.

When you make an assignment, always write a memo on it to the people concerned. Be sure to define assignments clearly. If you give a committee member an assignment, he should know how far he can go—try to tell him that specifically, and make sure that he understands. Recently in a women's club that met in the members' homes, a woman was put in charge of setting up the meeting places for the next year. Two days later the president was amazed to find that the woman had set the dates and had signed up homes for all of the year's meetings. "Why, the appointment was just tentative," the president complained. But the committee chairwoman had never been told that important fact. It pays to tell them specifically what they are to do and when and how.

The checking you do as chairman is important. It is good to have a large sheet on which you list all assignments. With

this before you, you can look over all details of the project at one glance. Such a sheet will be a big help to you in checking details. Some chairmen make a habit of working with each member on his assignment, and in large committees they meet with each subcommittee. It is a good idea to have the chairmen of subcommittees report on each meeting they hold. In organizing your committee, make your working arrangements so that you can keep on top of details. When something goes wrong at the last minute, you can't alibi by calling someone dumb. It is your committee, and perhaps you are the dumb one for not checking.

#### THE COMMITTEE REPORT

For a dinner dance, the committee report is the dance itself. For a Project B your report should go through the procedure you took with the original agenda.

1. You write up the report from the notes you have made of the discussion.
2. You send the report to the members to be checked for agreement and accuracy.
3. You will hear from some of the members, but if you don't hear from all of them telephone the others to get an O.K. from them on the report.
4. You make the changes necessary in the report.
5. You send the final report to the members again asking for suggestions.
6. You report back to the president of the club or to the club as a whole, whichever is the procedure in your particular organization.

If the committee report is to be made before an open meeting of the club, select the best speaker on the committee to make it. This may be you, the chairman, but if you have a better speaker let him do it. Then you are in reserve to emphasize what the report says. If the report is to be spoken,



make it as short as possible, cut all the preamble, and give the audience only the meat and potatoes. Leave the other details for discussion if you need discussion.

If the project needs some selling to the club, you might arrange for members not on the committee to make short talks in favor of it.

Such procedure, of course, is for the more elaborate project. If the committee is appointed to buy a gift for the retiring president, all you need is a jeweler as chairman and a couple of other members not in the tobacco business and you can be sure that the president won't get a box of cigars.

In all committee work, one man usually does the work and that man usually is chairman. But he gets agreement from the others. When he turns in his report, it is not his thinking, not his report. He makes it definitely a report of the committee as a whole.

Handle your committee report this way and your committee will get credit for doing a good job. But don't be too happy about the job you have done. For once you do a good job on one of these committees, you will be stuck with committee jobs for the rest of your life. That is as it should be too, because there are only a few people who can run committees and if you are one of them you should use your talents to the best interest of the organization.

Here again are the suggestions for committee work.

1. Get a clear understanding of what you are to do and how far you can go.
2. Get agreement of the committee members on the agenda.
3. Don't dominate the meetings or do all of the talking, let conclusions be the decision of the committee, not yours. Be a good listener.
4. Get agreement of the members on the report to be made.
5. Where the committee is running a dance or club affair:
  - a. Assign certain jobs to members; if possible select members who have had the assignment before.

- b.* Give members a written memo of their assignments, telling exactly what they are to do.
- c.* Make up a large sheet showing these assignments so that you can check at all times.
- d.* Meet with subcommittees; if necessary have reports of all subcommittee meetings sent you or work with the members on individual assignments.

6. In Chap. 16, covering the discussion session, there are many suggestions as to how you can get better discussion in your committee meetings. Read this chapter if you have a committee job to tackle soon.

## HOW TO STAGE A DISCUSSION SESSION

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A SHORT while ago I was guest speaker at a club meeting and the chairman of the program committee was telling me how difficult it was becoming to get guest speakers. "But we have found a way out," he said. "Now every other meeting, we run a discussion session and does the club go for it."

There is a good reason for that. The member of any club likes to have his say; he gets tired of getting talked at. That is why he goes for discussion-type meetings. It allows him to get his ideas out in the open and everybody likes to hear his own ideas expressed regardless of their worth. While the discussion-type session goes best for small groups, it can be put on for the larger audience by having a small group handle the discussion with the remainder of the group as spectators.

The round table is a type of session about which you can truthfully say to your club members, "This is your meeting." Most members of clubs refer to the people who run the club as "they." They did this, and they did that. And that is as it must be, because always a clique must run clubs. If the club is to keep on moving, somebody's got to do the work. But still when the group that runs the club talks to the membership and doesn't give that group a chance to talk back, the latter feels that they don't have as much to say in the management of the club as they should. That's why the round-table meeting

goes over well with them; then they are handling the program; they are taking part. They have their say.

But the discussion-session idea is no panacea for hard work. Before you get too deeply into a discussion program plan, you will find that perhaps it is just as easy to get the guest speakers. The discussion idea doesn't let the management of the club out of the organization of the programs. You still have to sit on top of the operation.

To organize a series of discussion sessions, one plan is to canvass the club. Tell them you are going to have a series of discussion sessions. Ask them what subjects they would like to have covered in these sessions. Usually there are enough subjects in the news at the moment to start you on your programs. Any big city newspaper can give you scores of subjects that would make good discussion material.

In canvassing the membership, it might be better to select a number of suggested subjects, list them on a mimeographed sheet, and send the sheet along with the letter to the members. Then the members vote on these subjects in the order of their preference.

When you have a count of the votes on the subjects submitted, you have the basis for the program. After you look this over, if you think that other subjects should be added, put them on the list. But give prominence to the subject that most men want to discuss. The subject that is suggested by one member probably isn't as important to the club as the subjects suggested by four, or five, or six. Thus, the subjects that are mentioned most often should be given preference. To start your program off with a bang, stage the first discussion on the subject that was mentioned most.

Usually when you make such a canvass there will be one fellow who has a pet subject that he wants discussed. This subject may be of little interest to the other people in the club, but this one member may keep after you to put it on. One good way to get rid of him is to give him the job of organizing

the discussion on that particular subject. Usually when the man puts on this session, he will do a good job of it. And even though his subject may not be of greatest interest to the people, he will put so much into it, it will make a good program for you.

The round-table meeting can be run without elaborate preparation. I have belonged to clubs that made up the discussion agenda after they arrived at the meeting. In such a meeting the leader asks each man in the group what the meeting should cover. As subjects are suggested, he writes them down. Then with the subjects listed, he gets a vote on the rating of each in importance. This, of course, was not a discussion as good as the one in which all subjects had been outlined beforehand, but a good bull session could be run with such organization. And that is what the round table is; it is simply a bull session with some organization. Everybody knows how difficult it is to break up a bull session.

In the round-table discussion you need a good leader. Pick a man for this job who is good on his feet, one who can keep the group in good humor. This leader is nearer a committee chairman than anything else.

The seating arrangement for such a discussion is important. Try to make this as informal as possible. Arrange your chairs so that each member of the group can see the other members. Keep the chairs close together so that no one has to talk loudly, for when a man has to raise his voice he is more likely to make a speech and you want the discussion to be carried on in a conversational tone.

For a small group, you can use a round table. For a large group a larger square table. Don't use a long narrow table, for then it is more difficult for the members to see each other. If you have an extra large group, get your tables arranged in a large U or circle. Tables are helpful when you want participants to take notes, but groups in these discussion sessions can be seated in a circle with no tables.

Start the discussion with a brief statement that sets up the

session and gives the importance of the subject to the group. This statement should

1. Outline the limits of the subject.
2. Sell the group on the importance of the subject to them.
3. Explain that the problems covered must be of importance to all.
4. Make it plain that informality is the rule; that courtesy rather than parliamentary rule is the procedure; that one man is to pick up the discussion where another leaves off.
5. Urge everybody to take part.

Make the discussion session informal. One scheme is to get the men in the group to take off their coats. Take off yours and suggest they follow suit. Call it a shirt-sleeve conference. I have seen this form of session in which no participant was permitted to wear a necktie. It helps to make for informality if the leader calls each man present by his first name.

Have a discussion outline; this need be only a list of the points or subjects to be covered. Select one of the subjects and ask, "Who wants to speak on this?" If you get no response to such a general question, call on an individual and ask, "Will you speak on this, Tom?" Always select one that you believe will have something to say. When the individual answers, call on another member of the group to elaborate on what has been said.

When a subject is opened for discussion, the man who first proposed it should be given the floor. Then every other man in the room should be given a chance to talk on the subject. This will not take so much time as it seems, for the first few speakers will cover most of the ground. Even so, every man should be urged and encouraged to say his piece.

Try to see that each point gets the amount of discussion it merits. The group may want to spend too much time on a minor point that you may want to cut off: stopping a discussion you may want to cut off is comparatively easy. Continu-

ing a discussion that the group seems to want to drop and putting life into it requires skill.

One of the best ways to develop a discussion is to ask questions that cannot be answered by a simple yes or no. Whenever a member of a group asks a question, avoid answering it. Call on another member of the group to explain what he believes to be the answer.

Many times one of the answers you receive can be submitted to the group with a question such as, "What do you think about this?" When one of the group says it is good or not good, ask him why.

You will sometimes find it helpful to make out that you don't quite understand the point made. By questioning an idea, you keep up the discussion. This should always be done in the manner of a man asking for information—you want to find out exactly what the group member means. Watch, however, that your question doesn't put the man on the spot. This may discourage others from taking part.

With the discussion going, you must try to see that it stays on the subject. If you do get off the subject and the group seems to want to continue the new subject, put this on schedule for a later discussion. Of course, there may be times when you will want to explore a side issue. One criterion of this is the importance of the side issue and the time you have available. You must, however, watch these explorations, a discussion can go from politics to baseball in nothing flat.

You may find it difficult to get back on the main track after one of these side trips. One way is to call attention to the fact that you are off the reservation and ask the group to come back. Another way is to compliment the individual who started you off on the side issue. Tell him it has been interesting, and ask him if he doesn't feel you should now return to the main subject. Often you can restate the main problem or have one of the group restate it, and this will bring you back.

If you are spending too much time on one subject and want

to get on, you can always call a recess and reopen the meeting on the next subject.

You will find all kinds of people in these discussion groups. Some will not take part in the discussion at all. Others will want to do all the talking. Here are some suggestions on how to handle these people.

1. The know-it-all: This brother is often bluffing. Ask him for reasons. If his reasons are sound, don't comment. If his reasons are not so good, ask the group to comment on them. If he proves too persistent, ask him to give others a chance; do this gently but firmly and only if it seems the only way to get him to pipe down.

2. He who won't talk: If this fellow is friendly, encourage him. Engage him in conversation. Direct questions at him. Interpret and restate his statements if they are poorly made. If he seems depressive, belligerent, or not too friendly, give him a job to do.

3. The one who knows: This fellow can be a big help. When the discussion lags, you can always count on him to say something. Watch, however, that he doesn't dominate the discussion.

4. The touchy person: This fellow may become angry or his feelings may be hurt if others disagree with him. Treat him in a patient and friendly manner. Come to his rescue in critical situations when you feel he has the right idea but seems to be getting the worst of the argument.

Watch arguments—they can be dynamite. Remember that there are jealousies in all groups. If an argument starts, stop it with some statement such as, "Wait, now. There is no sense in arguing about any one point. This subject has so many good points that we can forget that one."

Encourage expression of ideas. Men who are accustomed to the meetings in which they are talked at hesitate to open up. After they see how the discussion type of meeting works, they will speak up without hesitation, and then your main task will be to keep more than one man from talking at the same time.

If the discussion on any subject has a tendency to go too fast and you feel that the subject is not being thoroughly analyzed,



you can slow it down by asking individuals to clarify their statements. You can ask more than one person to give an opinion and discuss the identical point. If a man answers, "I feel the same as So-and-So does about it," ask him why.

If the discussion is one in which you want definite conclusions, try to get conclusions on which the group agrees. Get an agreement that this is the best way to tackle one problem. Keep the discussion focused on that one point until the group has a definite opinion. This opinion should be the opinion of everybody and not what you think it should be. It is usually a good plan to stop the discussion at its height and turn the attention of the group to summarizing and sifting out conclusions. Don't let the discussion die out.

The leader in a discussion type of meeting has a highly specialized job. He can ruin the meeting by inept handling, but with some thought beforehand and a study of the subject he can make it a most successful session.

Here are some suggestions for handling round-table meetings:

1. Get suggested subjects from members of the group. Give the subjects that are suggested most often prominence and position in time allotted.
2. Let the man who suggests a subject start the discussion. Call next on others who suggested the subject, and then open the discussion for everybody.
3. Round-table meetings can be staged without preparation. The group can make up the docket at the start of the meeting. When the list is completed, the men can vote on the order in which the subjects can be taken up.

Here are some suggestions that should prove helpful to the discussion leader:

4. Make up a discussion outline that suggests subjects and subdivisions of those subjects.
5. Start the meeting with a brief statement that sells the group on their need for the discussion and gives them a picture of what it means to them.

6. Watch that you don't talk too much. Don't consider yourself a teacher—you are more like a committee chairman. Contribute your ideas as one of the group rather than as a leader.
7. You are not supposed to know all the answers. It may be better not to give all the answers you know.
8. Keep the discussion focused on the subject.
9. Try to get each member of the group to contribute to the discussion.
10. Make sure that no one person does most of the talking.
11. Keep the discussion going by one of the following means:
  - a. Ask questions that cannot be answered by yes or no.
  - b. If a member of the group asks a question, don't answer it but refer it to another member of the group.
  - c. When you get no response to a general question, call on an individual.
  - d. Ask the same question of three or four persons.
  - e. Use "why" and "how" a lot. If a man says, "I agree with Charlie," ask why.
  - f. Sometimes ask debatable questions.
  - g. Make out that you don't understand exactly what is meant and ask the man to repeat.
  - h. Ask one member to sum up the points made so far.
12. Keep a check on who takes part in the discussion without revealing what you are doing. If it is difficult to check, you might ask, "Who hasn't commented yet?"
13. Never let anyone interrupt a man who is talking. If someone breaks in, say, "Just a minute, Pete, Jack has the floor," or "Hold it, Pete, your turn is next."
14. When Jack finishes, instead of allowing Pete to start arguing with him, ask Pete a question so that he is answering your question rather than debating with Jack.
15. Avoid all arguments between members of the group.
16. Encourage the expression of ideas.
17. Keep the meeting informal.
18. Don't let the discussion die out. Stop it at its height, and start summarizing.

## GROUP RUN MEETINGS

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EVERY so often the chairman of a club gets smart. He says, "With all the talent we have why couldn't we put on our own program?"

Now with some clubs that is entirely possible. I know clubs where they have changed over from the guest speaker to programs put on by their own people and have done quite well by the change. In other clubs I have found that the program is about fifty-fifty—they use the guest speaker half the time and the group runs the meetings the other half.

The group-run program requires quite a bit of organization, but here is a simple way to get one started. First, get an agreement that the club could have that type of program. Then call a meeting of ten or twelve possible leaders. Have these leaders work up a list of suggestions for programs, and then have each man in the group take a program.

Next, suggest that each one of the men select another member of the club, not one in the original meeting, as his partner in presenting his subject. With two men working on a discussion or other type of group-run meeting, you get better organization. If two work together, one prods the other and the presentation is not confined to one man's ideas. Usually one will take charge of presenting the subject and the other will handle the question-and-answer period. But the two will work together on the preparation, and that is where the teamwork counts. As the series of meetings progresses, each pair of leaders tries to surpass what has been done before. They will work

hard on their presentations, and at meeting time they will know the subject well.

In assigning dates you might have men draw numbers. This will give the men who draw the later date more time to prepare, but it will give the men who have the earlier date the first choice of the easy methods of presentation. With such a series it is easy to build up anticipation. Everybody wants to see what Gus and Bill will do with a particular subject. Enthusiasm will build up and will stay high during the whole series. You will find the activity a great attendance builder for every member of the club wants to see what the others will do.

The skit put on by club members is one of the types of group-run programs. There are lots of objections to the skit written by amateurs and put on by amateurs. It is usually not so good. However, if the group wants to put on a Thanksgiving or Christmas program, it might be well to have them get a program that is already written. The problems of such a skit in the meeting are

1. The script
2. The actors
3. The director

Of course, that is everything there is to the skit. Usually, the meeting skit is written by a writer who knows how to write letters or catalogues, but not conversation and drama. He tackles the job with a high resolve that may come out with anything. His conversation may look fine in print, but it won't sound so well with the actors selected; the dialogue may be too wordy or too dull.

Then the actors, if they are recruited from the club, can be almost anything. If you have a local community theater activity, you might select the actors from that group. The big trouble with skits is that most of the people in them have everything but the ability to speak loud enough to be heard in the third row of the auditorium.

The director—well, that's you, the chairman of the meeting, or some other fellow who thinks he can whip it all together and polish it up to the point where it gets over its message. He has seen plenty of shows and it looks easy. So he keeps the cast up until midnight for three or four nights, and he feels he has done his job.

Still there is this about the skit, there are certain people who like to act and like the applause. They also like the kidding that comes to them after it. If you try the skit in a group-run program, here are some suggestions for it.

1. Keep it as short as possible.
2. Beware of long wordy conversation that tries to put over a moral or lesson.
3. Watch the horseplay.
4. If you can possibly hire writers and directors, do it. If you want to use your own people as actors, hire a writer and a director.

Some sort of management control is necessary for the meetings run by group members, but it must be a control that is under cover. First, it is well to let the group arrange the plan. Work it out if you will, but bring them in to discuss it with you. That discussion is important, because it makes the meeting theirs, not yours. You may present three or four other plans for running the session, but let them do the selecting. When they have made their choice, set up the program and agree on the rules. Then give the club the ball.

Of course, where the plan calls for individual leaders, it is possible to sit down with each leader and discuss his session. This helps to keep the meetings on the track. It is also possible to suggest angles of which the leader may not have thought. The purpose of such a meeting discussion would be not to shape the program, but merely to help and to make sure that the program and the subject are covered in a way that interests the members.

Remember that most club members realize that speaking be-

fore a group can be of help in their self-development. They see that men who speak well hold most of the better jobs, and they are willing to pitch in and try to prove that they too have the ability to put over a story to a group. Further, these people who belong to clubs have most of them taken public-speaking courses at some time and the reason they aren't better speakers is because they don't get enough practice. That's another reason why they go into this group-run session with enthusiasm and put on a good meeting for you. A variety of programs can be arranged and every one of them will be of the fullest interest to the club as well as to the men who put it on.

One suggestion you might use on this type of meeting is to get the older members of the club, the people who resent any change, to put on the earlier programs. These people will be reluctant at first, but after you get them into the plan they will be enthusiastic and do much of the work required.

Group members respond to this type of meeting. They put inicks and help make the club meeting more interesting. If you have been depending on guest speakers, try letting a group run a meeting. You'll get novelty and variety and you will find that it is a popular move with your club members.

Here are some suggestions to follow in these group-run sessions:

1. Get a group into a meeting and let it select the subjects to be covered.
2. Have the one man who has been assigned a subject select another or a third to help him put on the program.
3. Let the members actually run the meetings. Advise, but don't interfere.
4. Encourage originality in methods of presentation.
5. If one meeting is not too good, don't criticize the people who put it on. Get together with the next group and see that they get back on the track.

6. Use the older, never-want-to-change members to put on the first programs.
7. Check after every group-run meeting to see if the presentation was of interest to the members.
8. When you put on skits, get professional help if possible, professional writers and directors especially.

## ENTERTAINMENT AT YOUR MEETING

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ONE DAY last year I talked to a lady who had played the piano through the luncheon at a club meeting at which I was the guest speaker. The dear soul was almost in tears at the treatment she had received. There had been no announcement before her appearance, no word of thanks after. The members had kept on talking and eating while she played and the applause had been light and confined to the tables near the piano.

As an old hand at appearing for free at club gatherings, I tried to comfort her with the advice, "Don't expect anything but the worst—that's what you'll invariably get."

I know nothing about the whys and wherefores of that lady's appearance before this club, but I do know that they treated her rough. And that was the fault of the man running the meeting. He didn't need that piano player, the meeting didn't need the entertainment, and he should have kept the lady off the program.

While the handling of entertainers with most clubs is standardized—announce them, thank them, pay them—there are a lot of clubs that push the talent around. Perhaps they do not act as badly as in the case above, but the talent is treated roughly nevertheless. Next time you are at a club meeting note the entertainers. Most times they give the appearance that they are sorry that they came, and that holds even though they get paid for the performance.



But enough of that, let's get down to getting this entertainment—if the club needs it.

In most towns entertainment features are available for your club. So the first thing you do as entertainment chairman is to canvass the facilities of the town. Check the schools, the choral groups, the choirs, the musical talent, the children's theater, community players, orchestras, glee clubs, the amateur magicians, and the winners in forensic contests or in musical competitions. If you sat down now and listed every entertainment possibility in your own town or neighborhood, that list would be impressive.

But here is one caution about this local talent—don't sign up an unknown. See the act first. It doesn't take much time to audition an act. Many entertainers are anxious to appear before the good clubs of the town. This is particularly true if you are offering pay or a contribution to the treasury of the group putting on the entertainment. You can avoid much embarrassment by checking to see whether or not the entertainment is good before you sign it up.

It might be a good idea to have a man from one of the local theaters or from the radio station on your entertainment committee. The man who runs the radio station knows of talent which wants to appear on the air and thus would provide you with many leads which would make good programs. The local theater man is usually interested in the people performing at spots around town and many times he can help you get acts.

If motion pictures can be used, there are also a number of productions put out by commercial firms that you can get for nothing or for a very small fee, sometimes only the express charges to send the film back to its owner. These may make good entertainment features for you. The Army and Navy have many such pictures. But here again the same caution applies as to any entertainment. Look it over beforehand. Don't put on a motion picture before your club that you haven't

seen. See it first and find out whether or not you think it will go.

One of the projectionists in the local motion picture house no doubt makes a business of showing motion pictures to groups. Find out who he is, get in touch with him, and he will tell you of a number of such pictures. He has shown them at other gatherings and can tell you about them. Don't take his word that the pictures are good, because he is out after that job of renting his projector and services to you and he might say some pictures were good that wouldn't fit at your meeting.

Always decide whether or not you need entertainment; and don't use entertainment if you don't need it. You have seen the time at your club meeting when someone brought a guest. Another member knew that the guest was a pianist. They got after you, the chairman, to ask the guest to play. And since you didn't want to offend, you did. That's O.K. if the program needs the piano playing. If not, it is just adding another feature that might clog up your program. Handle this by inviting the pianist to appear on a later program. Explain that you would like to use him as the big feature and not as an added attraction. No artist can get peeved at that.

You can have too much entertainment. Usually one entertainer at a luncheon is enough. You might run in two or three at a dinner or evening affair. But don't have too many. Recently a club that usually has a complete vaudeville show at its annual affair took all the money available and spent it on one pianist, a good act. It took quite a bit of selling by the chairman to get the committee to agree to such a deal, but agree they did, and the pianist made a bigger hit than any of the vaudeville shows they had before.

A sure way to get talent is to have a setup with a theatrical agency who can supply such talent for you. Many times there is such an agent in your own town. If not, there are a number

in the closest large city. Tell them what you want and what you can pay, and they will deliver to you.

If you plan to pay the talent when they perform, have the check ready so that it can be paid when they have finished and not mailed to them when the treasurer gets around to it. If you pay in currency, go down to the bank and get some clean bills. Of course, dirty dollars are just as good in the stores, but the clean money stamps your club as thoughtful.

Always treat your talent as you would a guest speaker. That holds even if you pay them. Always offer food—it is of record that talent is ever hungry. Then when you place them in the dining room, don't put them in a spot where they have to climb over guests and chairs to get to the stage. Help them set up their instruments. Give them a good introduction. If they give you biographical data, don't get it balled up. Give it to the group just as they give it to you. Treat your talent right and you'll get a better performance.

Here again are the suggestions for handling entertainment at your meeting.

1. Canvass the town for entertainment possibilities.
2. Use a talent agency in town or in the nearest large town.
3. Check the projectionist in the local motion picture house for industrial and educational motion pictures as possibilities for entertainment features.
4. If you pay the talent, have the check ready. If you pay in currency, have clean bills.
5. Try a gift for the entertainments for which you can't pay.
6. Don't sign up an unknown act or motion picture.
7. Don't use entertainment if you don't need it.
8. Don't overdo. Don't have too much entertainment. One good act for which you pay quite a bit of money may be better than a number of poor ones.
9. Treat the entertainment talent as you would the guest speaker.

## VARIETY IN YOUR MEETINGS

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VARIETY is the spice of life. While your club or committee meeting isn't a show, you can help hold interest if you put some showmanship into it. No, I don't mean clown it or bring in a lot of extraneous matter just to enliven things. That is not it; but use a little showmanship to get the most out of the subject matter you plan to use.

In staging your session, take a tip from the old-time vaudeville show. Keep things changing. First, they gave you the trained seals, then came the acrobats, the song-and-dance team, the soprano, the comedian, the bicycle riders and so on, ditto, datto, dotto. It was the variety that held your interest for a full evening. If you didn't like the bicycle riders, the chances were you might like the comedian. If sopranos were no dice, you could enjoy the acrobats.

The change of type of act wasn't the only variety. One act was played on the full stage, another in front of the red plush curtains, and another in front of a drop featuring advertisements of the local merchants. Change, change, change, and you ate it up. In putting on your meeting, try for that same variety. You'll need it. Perhaps you don't need it so much in the luncheon meeting, but you do need it in the meeting that runs through a morning, an afternoon, or a full day.

There are a number of kinds of variety you can get . . . variety in speakers, variety in subject matter, variety in the exhibits the speakers use, variety in tempo, and variety in what is done.

First, let's talk about variety in speakers. There are all kinds

of speakers. Some talk loud and others hardly loud enough to be heard. Some put it out with the speed of an express train; others talk like a slow freight. When you are planning this program, don't put two spellbinders together. Not long ago, I attended a meeting at which every speaker seemed to be trying to blast out the walls of the meeting room. Now, all those speakers were good speakers. They knew how to present their subjects, but each was trying to outdo the others, and since the first shouted at the top of his voice there was little variety in the presentation.

Now it won't be often that you have to worry about the fact that all your speakers are too loud. Usually, it will be the other way around. They won't be loud enough. I believe there should be a flasher sign on the rear wall of all meeting rooms that would keep flashing to these whisperers this advice, "Talk a little louder, Joe."

When you have a speaker who doesn't seem to be able to put a lot of fire into his presentation, sandwich him in between two fellows who will put a lot of energy into what they say. Thus, the audience isn't continually kept at the same tension all through the whole meeting.

Usually it is a good plan to space your speakers so that you build up towards the end. Put your poorer speaker on first, and then wind up with your spellbinder. This is a particularly good plan if you can get the spellbinder to button up the meeting for you. Usually, after the good speaker is finished, there is little that the poor speakers coming after him can do.

Once I made that mistake in a meeting I was running. I put on a team of speakers that had an excellent presentation. I hadn't heard them before, so I placed them in the middle of an evening session. After that team was finished, there was no need to have anyone else. They stole the show and really ruined my program. When you have a number of speakers, try to place them so that you have variety.

The next variety you can plan about is variety in what is done. You might have a speech, then a movie, and then a glee

club or other musical number. Try also for variety in the exhibits used by the speakers. If you are arranging a meeting that runs through a full day, try to get a variety in the presentation aids which the speakers use. Once I attended a three-day meeting in which speaker followed speaker and every one of them used charts to illustrate his lecture. On the third day, when charts were a dime a hundred, one speaker walked out on the platform, unrolled a large piece of paper, and said, "This is my chart, I'll talk from it."

When he turned the paper around so that the audience could see it, it was a picture of a shapely miss in a red bathing suit. He got a laugh, but his action illustrates a point for you. Don't chart them to death; now a chart presentation, now a speech, then a film, and next a skit—that's the idea, variety.

Next watch the timing of your meeting. Arrange your program so that a high point comes at regular intervals. Don't have all your high points right at the start or close to the end. Spot them through the meeting, so that when they come you get full benefit from them. Not long ago in commenting on a meeting we had sat through, one man said, "This meeting was well done. Every now and then something happened and lifted it out of the rut." Those happenings were due to good meeting management. Perhaps the subjects were not in the order they should have been, but the man who put on that meeting placed his speakers and their exhibits so that he had variety with the high points coming at intervals.

Next comes the change of pace. It is important in speech-making and it is important in the whole meeting. If you have more than one lecturer at your session, put the man who talks slowly next to the man who talks rapidly. If you have two men with the same whine or the same accent, separate them. If a man can't talk for sour apples, try to sandwich him in between two spellbinders. The audience goes for such variety and the closer you come to it the better the meeting will be.

The service clubs, which have a meeting every week, have a greater problem of getting this variety into their meetings,

but it can be achieved. Once I watched a sales manager put on a thirty-minute meeting every morning for a month. Every one of those meetings was different. There was pep, snap, and variety. It meant the manager had to work overtime to plan, but the point is he did it. And yet I have heard men, who manage these luncheon clubs, say, "All our sessions have to be pretty much alike, we have one every week."

That is not true. Of course, when you are running a club and have to put on a luncheon meeting every week with some sort of program, you are quite likely to grab what is available. If someone tells you about a speaker on a certain subject, you put him on. When you present a speaker on one subject, a member tells you, "I know another man who is an authority on this subject." Usually the program chairman will agree that it would be a good idea to get the second man as a speaker. This is wrong. It is not right to have too many talks on China, too many talks on aviation, or too many talks on any other subject. Those subjects may be alive and in the news at the moment, but too much of it is enough. You may like fried chicken, but you wouldn't like to eat it every meal. It is the same with your meeting programs.

To check your club for this variety in the subjects of its guest speakers, make a list of the last twenty programs you have had. Now take a large sheet of paper and draw twenty squares on it. Next write in the twenty squares the twenty speech subjects in the order that they came. This will give you a review of the past programs and will tell you whether or not you had this variety in speech subject matter. If you had, fine, whether or not you planned it that way. Now with another sheet with twenty squares, plan the next twenty programs with the thought of getting that variety in speech subjects that makes a club live. Get the idea? You can do a lot by such planning.

Then there is a word to say for variety in the types of meetings you have. If yours is a luncheon club, why have a guest

speaker every meeting? Why not use some of the other ideas given in this book to get variety in your programs? Today put on the guest speaker, next meeting put on a discussion session, and next time put on some kind of a quiz session. Of course, this means work, but anything that makes a hit with the club members is certain to mean work. You can divide this work by getting a large number of the club members to work with you.

Don't, as the chairman of the program committee, get the feeling that "All sessions have to be pretty much alike." If you do, you are only kidding yourself. Even though the meetings come every day, they can be as different as you will take the trouble to make them. And you must take that trouble. If your meetings, week after week, are exactly the same, members will come to know what to expect and they will be none too much concerned whether or not they attend. Remember you can't mandamus them. But if you take the trouble to give these members variety—ah, that is a different story. Variety is the spice of life, and variety is a great pepper-upper of any kind of meeting.

Try for variety in your meetings by following these suggestions:

1. Try for variety in what is done—a speech this time, a movie next time, and so on.
2. Try for variety in speakers. Have the fast talker next to the slow talker, the quiet man next to the loud. Shuffle your speakers so that men with similar voices, accents, or deliveries don't follow one another.
3. Try for variety in the speakers' exhibits; have one use a set of charts, another a film, another slides, and another a skit. You have all sorts of things to choose from.
4. Try to arrange your meeting so that the high points don't bunch up.
5. Try for variety in subject matter in your guest speakers. Study how well you have scored on this variety in past meetings, and plan to get variety in your future meetings.



## END ON A HIGH NOTE

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**G**IVE YOUR meeting a good ending, one that makes the members want to come back. It should make them feel that the job is buttoned up, that the incident is closed. So many meetings get under way beautifully, but then the program seems to be like the man on skis on the steep hill: he's started, he's still standing up, he's hoping, but where he is going to end is a complete mystery to him.

Too many meetings start off at top speed and then slow down gradually until they seem to piddle out. Early they build up enthusiasm to the high point. Everybody is enthusiastic. Then the tempo slows, and down goes the thermometer that measures the enthusiasm of the group—down, down, down until by the time the meeting is finished, the enthusiasm that was built up earlier has completely disappeared.

Other meetings start off slowly. They build and build until the finale is the big moment. First, the audience isn't so much interested, then it begins to warm up, and finally it reaches a fever pitch, and then when it is at the top the meeting ends. This should be your objective—save some meat and save some potatoes. Save some surprise too so that when you come to the end of your meeting you are on the upbeat.

You no doubt remember the Mark Twain story about the preacher's sermon. When the speaker had been going five minutes, the author was willing to drop \$2.00 in the collection plate. When the preacher had been going ten minutes, he was

willing to put out \$1.00. When the sermon had lasted thirty minutes, he felt the preacher owed him money.

One way to keep from owing the group money is to plan the end of your meeting first. Start with the end. That may sound like putting the cart before the horse, but it can make good sense, for the finish is most likely to give the impression the listeners take home. Some speakers write the end of their speeches first and then go back to the beginning and the middle of the speech and build up to the end. The same plan can be used in the design of your meeting.

There is always something you want the club to do. It may be no more than to come back next time; then at the end of your meeting make a strong pitch for the next meeting. Ask yourself, "How shall I do it?" "What do I want the club to do?" The answer to those questions will give you a clear picture of the understanding you want them to take home. Now make your ending a description of that "what" and "how." If, at the end of the meeting, you are still talking about what the group members are to do and how to do it, they leave you knowing perfectly well what their job is and how they are to proceed. This is particularly true of the meeting where you are assigning some task such as soliciting funds or working on prospective members.

On the latter type of meeting you have a real need for an organized ending. You have heard the chairman at your luncheon club announce, "Perhaps brother So-and-So has something to say about this." Slowly brother So-and-So gets to his feet. He starts in a low voice. He "ums" and "ahs," he is off his base, but courageously and futilely he goes on and on. Everybody knows that he has been caught without any definite idea on the subject. Finally he reaches the point where he feels that he has done his bit and he ends lamely, "Well, fellows, that's all I have to say." A lot of club sessions end that way. "Well, that's it boys, we'll adjourn." Just like Porky Pig lisping "That's all folks."

Now if you are ever put on the spot by the president asking you to give an opinion on some subject to which you have given no thought, here is a tip on how to get out gracefully. Don't worry at all about what you are going to say about the subject, think only of your ending. You know what the group should do. Put that in a three-step formula, first this, second this, and third this. That will be your ending. Then when you get to your feet, go through the familiar routine of "ums" and "ahs," but when you think you have talked long enough, give them your formula. Like this—"First, go jump in the lake"; "Second, swim out"; "Third, shake off the water"; "Fourth, hang your clothes on a limb to dry."

Give them the formula, sit down quickly, and listen to the applause. The group will think that you have ideas. Chances are they will say, "That fellow really knows what he is talking about."

A scheme used by a number of clubs is to have a set ceremony to end each meeting. This is part of the ritual. They end with a song, the oath to the flag, with a prayer, or some other suitable device. But never do these clubs skip that ending. It takes time, but makes a definite conclusion that the club members recognize. Such an ending ceremony should be short and snappy. There should be just enough to furnish a finishing touch.

Another scheme that works well is to assign the job of ending the meeting to a different member each time. To set up this type of procedure, you would have to draw lots to see who the first few would be. The member would be allowed to end the meeting in his own way, perhaps he would tell a story or make a short talk. A time limit, of course, should be put on how long the member can take, but with the ending ceremony rotating among the members there would be competition among members to see who could devise the cleverest ending. It doesn't take long for an idea like this to become ritual.

In a meeting where you have a number of speakers try to get a good one on last. A good speaker can send away an audience with a good impression. If you can get him to tell them what to do and how, you are lucky. Many times good speakers are tops at blue sky and eyewash and nothing else. Such a fellow doesn't belong last. What you need in the meeting at which you want a plan given to the club is a buttoner-upper. If your good speaker will do that for you, your worries about the ending are over. It will be better, of course, if your meeting was on the upgrade when he came on, but that isn't too important, for usually he is adept at picking meetings out of the gutter and bringing them up to the fifth or sixth story.

When you end with this type of speaker, don't follow him with a lot of senseless announcements. Get the announcements out of the way before he comes on, put him on, and let the members go home when he waves the flag.

If you want the audience to do something for you, don't drag them into the end of the meeting dead tired. Call a recess twenty minutes before you finish, or have the group stand up and do some breathing exercises. Do something to freshen up the ending. Then assign the job you want them to do with all the enthusiasm you can put into the performance.

The ending of your meeting is important. Plan it in detail. Put all you have into it and your session will produce better results. If you can build it as a ceremony, one that the club members look forward to, they won't be running out before the meeting is over.

Here are some suggestions for the ending of your meeting.

1. Organize the ending first. If you have something you want the group to do, have your ending present a clear picture of what and how.
2. Try to arrange your subject and speakers so that interest builds up to the end.
3. Never let a session fade out. Stop while interest is still high.

4. End in such a way that the audience knows that you are finished.

5. Where you have a number of speakers, get a good one last. Send the group home with a good impression.

6. Don't follow the inspirational speaker who winds up your meeting with a lot of routine announcements. Make the announcements before the inspirational speech.

7. Work out a distinctive ending for all your meetings that will be a trade-mark of your club.

8. Try the idea of having a different man in charge of the ending of each meeting.

9. Try the simple step-by-step formula ending. First you do this, second this, and third this.

10. Always try to make the end of the session a high point in the meeting.

## FOLLOW-UP OF YOUR MEETING

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**W**HY FOLLOW up a meeting? It's gone—over the dam. It is a dead duck, why resurrect it? That's a good question. But any one meeting is only an incident in the busy life of an up-and-going club. There comes a time when you want a follow-up of a meeting. Let's say attendance is falling off, or the weather has kept down attendance for two or three weeks. That's a danger signal in any club. Of course, you will do something about that. Perhaps a follow-up of a recent meeting at which attendance was low can help you build attendance for subsequent meetings. The programs have been good, and you want to tell the club members who could not get there that you have had good programs.

One club does this by sending out a mimeographed report on the talk or discussion at the last meeting. This is really a promotion of the next meeting, for that report on the past meeting always has something to say about what is coming next. Many times such a report can save the meeting that wasn't too good. Not so very long ago club members organized a series of meetings that they hoped would do a lot to build prestige for their club. But the first speaker in the series, although highly recommended and because of that heavily advertised, rambled and talked on far beyond the time any talker should take. The result was a club membership asking, "Is this a sample of what this series will be?"

Here then was a dilemma for the management of the club. They had gone all out to advertise the series of meetings. They

had built this man up as a particularly able speaker, and his performance had thrown them down terribly. What could they do? Well, the enterprising secretary of the club took notes on the speaker's talk. As he sat in his office trying to figure out what he could do to save attendance at the meetings to follow, he thought of his notes. He got them out and he wrote an excellent digest of the good points the speaker had made. This was sent out to the membership.

The secretary was quite impressed two or three days later when one of the men who had attended the first lecture told him, "You know, I listened to that fellow the other night and I didn't realize he had made so many good points." He had many similar comments. Some members wrote in for additional copies of the digest. Here was a meeting that called for a definite follow-up, and by his digest of the points made the secretary saved his series of meetings.

A second way to pick up attendance at subsequent meetings is to use the previous meeting in a telephone canvass. Here you assign the telephoning to a number of the members. Ask each to telephone two or three friends who did not appear and simply say, "Bill, you missed a good meeting." Of course, Bill's friend would go on to tell him something that happened at the meeting and something about what the speaker said. It would make Bill feel that perhaps he was missing something by not coming to the meetings regularly.

The telephone canvass works better if it is not handled as a direct sales campaign. The man should telephone his friend about some other subject and bring up the matter of club attendance as a second thought.

At times, as in the life of any club, you have had a series of sour programs. Those programs may be your fault and they may not. It may be that you have run into tough luck in the grouping of speakers. In such a case, all you can do is take what the speaker has done well and use it to make the members feel that even though the speaker wasn't such a good speaker,

he did have some good ideas. You might even build the impression that the club is out for ideas and not so much for hot-shot speakers. "We don't get such good speakers, but we surely do get the information."

Many clubs use a report on the meeting as a follow-up. Some of these are quite elaborate with complete scripts of talks given by the speakers and in many cases are enlivened by photos of people who attended the sessions. Such proceedings always get attention. The man who didn't come to the meeting sees the photographs of his old friends there having a good time and he resolves to attend the next get-together.

Newsy reports of what happened, even at luncheon meetings, can help in this follow-up. Where luncheon meetings are about all the club does, this follow-up is important. In such reports, it is good to give all details. Tell them that Joe wasn't there; so Pete led the singing. The report can tell of other happenings. If it was Joe's birthday, what did the club do about it? Then always finish your report with news about the meeting next week. Tell members why they don't want to miss that.

When the guest speaker makes a promise at the meeting, be sure to help him keep this promise. If he has promised to send a copy of a certain chart or a booklet to members of the group, follow up to see that he sends it. Don't let your speaker fall down on any promise. It is the club management's job to follow up for the members and you should make that follow-up to the best of your ability. It may not be your promise, but even so, you should see that it is kept. You produced the speaker. You should see that he keeps his promises.

Follow-up also should include thank-you notes to the speakers. Don't let this task go unorganized. Set it up so that it runs automatically, but always check what you do. Don't thank a speaker who didn't appear for you. I have had that happen to me. I have been on a program and haven't been able to appear. Then a few days after the date of the meeting, I



received a thank-you note from the chairman of the meeting. Now that is carelessness. The club had an automatic thank-you scheme, which was a good idea. They had a setup that worked beautifully, but they didn't have anybody to check it. If you set up a scheme that works automatically, always be sure to check.

Always follow up on the bills that you should pay. One way to make sure that they are paid is to pay them at the meeting. If you pay the guest speaker or the entertainers, bring the check for the payment along with you, and pay it then. If you have bills for flowers or other such items, get those paid. Remember that you are not finished with your meeting until everybody is thanked and all bills are paid.

Here then are some suggestions for the follow-up of the meeting:

1. You might follow up your meeting by giving a report of the proceedings.
2. Follow it up by a newsletter about the activities at the meeting.
3. Send out a mimeographed report of the talk or discussion.
4. Pick the best points from the talk of the guest speaker, and send those out.
5. Make a telephone canvass. Have members who attended telephone other members who didn't attend and talk to them about the meetings.
6. If you have an association meeting, you might send a copy of the proceedings. In such a case, enliven the copy with photographs of the people who had been there.
7. Set up an organized plan to send thank-you notes to everybody who contributed to your meeting.
8. Make an automatic setup so that all bills are paid.

## HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR PRESENTATION

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SOME TIME ago the secretary of a club to which I belong came down off the platform after making a presentation of a plan to the club. He had done a bang-up job. As he came to the back of the hall where I was standing, he asked, "Did I sell it?"

While his words formed a question, he wasn't asking. He knew that he had sold his plan. He could tell by the enthusiastic applause at the end of his talk. In analyzing his presentation, anyone could see that he knew how to present a plan. First, he knew the group. Second, he told his story in terms of their interest. Third, he asked for commitments all through the talk. Fourth, he anticipated their objections and answered them. And in his windup, he asked for the order. Yes, his question as he came off the platform was really a statement. You could tell that he knew he had sold them by the grin on his face.

When you want to present a plan to the club for adoption, use the formula he used. Here it is:

1. Classify the group.
2. Tell your story in terms of their interest.
3. As you tell the story, ask for commitments.
4. Anticipate their objections and answer them.
5. Ask for the order.

That's a common formula for making a sale, but when you are presenting a plan to the club for adoption you want to sell the plan. Then why not go about the job as a salesman would?

Well, let's talk about the first point—classifying your prospect. When you go in to buy a pair of shoes, an experienced clerk looks you over. From your clothes or the shoes you have on, he can tell about the quality of shoes you want and the price you will pay. In other words, he classifies you. Now since you are one of the mainsprings of this club, you have classified this group of yours and you know pretty well who they are and what they are. Probably in your club there is one man who represents a composite of the whole club. Perhaps in making up any presentation to the club, you should think of that one member. If he is a good sample of the club, anything that would interest him would probably interest a high percentage of the group.

Second, you talk in terms of the prospect's interest, not in terms of your interest or the club's interest or the association's interest. You talk in terms of the member's interest. That is why it is so difficult to sell some national idea to the local people. They can't see how they profit.

When the clerk shows you those shoes in the shoe store, he tells you, "You'll get long wear out of that pair," or "They will hold their shape." When you make your presentation, you have to talk that way—in terms of your listeners' interest. For each is sitting there asking, "How about me?" Answer him in just that way. Talk your plan in terms of what he will get out of it. Explain the plan in terms of how much better off he will be if the club decides to adopt the plan. Remember, if he doesn't profit, there is no reason why he should be in favor of this plan you are explaining.

It is the same with all of us. Don't think he is discourteous because he won't listen to your presentation. Don't think that he has no right to talk to the fellow next to him. Don't think

it is his fault if he dozes off. He does all those things because you don't talk in terms of his interest. Talk to him about his interest, and he will ride with you all the way. Talk to him about something he doesn't care about and he says to himself, "Keep right on, Joe, you are not bothering me."

All right, what is his incentive for being in favor of this plan of yours? What can he get out of it? You must make this quite plain if you want to hold his interest. What you offer may be a big opportunity for the club and for him, but if you don't make it clear to him that he, too, will profit he may not be interested.

So before you start this presentation of yours, take a sheet of paper, draw a line down the center of it, and write on one side of that line "Why I want my listener to adopt this plan." Then on the other side of the line write, "Why he should be for the plan." Then under both headings write down the reasons why, the advantages to you and the advantages to him.

Both are important. The reasons why you want your listener to be in favor of your plan will suggest reasons why he should be in favor. But in working up your material for your presentation, use only the reasons why he will benefit. Remember he won't do it for your sake, or because of the club, he will do it only because it is to his advantage.

The third step in your plan is to ask for commitments. The shoe man asks, "Are they comfortable?" or "Do you like the tan or the cordovan?" During the course of your presentation, you must ask many such questions about your plan: "Isn't that right?" "Do you believe that?" Ask that kind of a question and the members of the audience don't need to answer. Their faces will tell you whether or not they are going along with you. It is important that you get commitments from the group. If they agree on a point, you can pass that over. But if they don't agree, you must spend more time explaining that point—explaining and selling until they are convinced.

Your fourth step is to answer objections. You say the shoe

binds and the shoe salesman says, "I can ease it up." Of course, you can't follow that example. You will anticipate many of the objections to your plan, for you know from experience what those objections will be. Thus, it is good common sense to build your presentation so that it answers these objections before they are raised. Make the objections yourself just as the audience might make them and answer them with your strongest, most powerful, arguments. And don't, for goodness' sake, duck the big objection. Get that one out in the open early, and pin back its ears.

The last step in your formula is to ask for the order. The shoe salesman asks, "Shall I wrap them up or will you wear them?" Always you want this group of yours to do something about the plan. Tell them exactly what you want them to do. Make it specific, definite, and put it in words of one syllable. Tell them what, how, and when, and then ask them to do it. Always finish by asking for your order.

Briefly, this shows you how you can build your presentation around a sales formula. Remember that you have to sell these people. The value of the formula is that you make certain that you follow good selling principles in your presentation.

Without any presentation you may be in position to force the club to go for this plan. Even so, it is better if you can sell them on the idea that the plan is better or more advantageous to them. Most of the dreary meetings you have sat through were dull because the speaker did not take the trouble to talk in terms of your interest. He was saying, "I want you to do it this way," or, "Many of the members feel it should be done this way." Instead, he should have been saying, "You will gain or profit if the club does it this way, and here's how."

Remember when you go before a meeting, you have to sell the benefits of your plan. The best way to sell anything is the way the experts work with a plan. Build your presentation over a sales formula and it will come closer to answering that question, "What do I get out of it?"

Here again is that formula:

1. Classify the club members.
2. Talk in terms of their interest.
3. Ask for commitments.
4. Answer the objections.
5. Ask for the order.

Another successful formula used by salespeople which you can adopt for making this type of presentation is

1. Make your audience dissatisfied.
2. Suggest a remedy.
3. Answer objections.
4. Ask for the order.

How many times have you sat in a club meeting and heard a man present a grand plan? As he explained it, you thought it was really something the club should do; yet he stood up there making a miserable flop of the presentation. That man had not thought of his presentation as a sale. Think of any plan you want the club to adopt in terms of a selling job to be done. Build your presentation over a sales formula as a salesman would and you will come closer to selling your package.

## YOU CAN BE INTERESTING

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THE LAST chapter gave you a plan with which you can organize your presentation. Now you will need a speech of presentation. That speech must be interesting. It must keep the audience awake. You have heard speakers orate about nothing and make it interesting. You have heard others speak on a subject of utmost importance to you, and yet it was all you could do to keep awake.

One fellow says, "There is a tendency in the world today. . . ." Another puts it, "I was reading in the paper this morning. . . ." Then he takes a morning newspaper out of his pocket and shows it to you. It is such differences that make one talk dull and another interesting.

Now here are a number of simple sure-fire ways to make your talk interesting: (1) tell stories; (2) use gossip; (3) bring in people; and (4) use news. There are four rules that will make any talk interesting.

Let's start with stories. Every week people buy millions of magazines. Why? To read stories—fiction stories and fact stories. There is no reason why you can't make stories brighten your talk. I don't mean funny stories; I mean anecdotes about you and your experiences, stories that prove points about your plan.

If you say that last Friday in Cleveland you saw this and that in a drugstore window, your audience listens because you are telling a story. Not long ago, I had to use some evidence on the growth of the electric refrigerator business. I wanted to

present the fact that in 1933 the industry sold one million refrigerators, while in 1941, three and one-half million were sold. I wanted to show that the industry had grown three and one-half times in eight years.

However, I wanted to present that in such a way that the information stayed with the audience, and therefore I put it in story form. I told the following story:

The other night I was riding up to Springfield, Massachusetts, with one of our refrigerator engineers. We were talking, and I said to him, "What would be your estimate of the growth of the refrigerator business in the last eight years?"

He asked, "Do you mean the company or the industry?"

"I mean the industry," I explained.

"I have nothing to go on," he said, "but I would say that the increase was about 50 percent."

Then I took a piece of paper out of my pocket and showed him the figures. In that eight years, the industry sales had grown by three and one-half times. In other words, from a business of one million refrigerators in 1933, it had grown to three and one-half million refrigerators in 1941. When I told him this, he was surprised. Here was a man so close to the business that he didn't realize how fast it was growing.

There is an example of what I mean by the use of a story. I had a statistic; I wanted to make that statistic interesting, and therefore I handled it in story form.

Next, if this talk is to be interesting, put some gossip into it. If you say that you went inside that drugstore in Cleveland to talk to the clerk about what you saw, your audience is all ears, because they want to hear what the clerk said to you and what you said to him. That is gossip. Columnists have made fortunes writing such gossip because people like to read it. The gossip they write concerns movie stars and such. The gossip you will use in your lecture will be about people like those in your audience; for instance, my conversation with my engineer. Talk about the kind of people in your audience or the kind



of people they associate with and they will be interested in what you have to say.

The beauty of this plan is that you don't have to make up such stories or gossip. Just listen tonight at your meeting. One of the group will say something and tomorrow night you can repeat what that fellow said. Now it is a story and it is gossip. You make your point and you drive it home with, "Last night at a meeting when I made this point, some one said. . . ." You're using what you said and what they said to make your story interesting.

Always bring in people in your stories or gossip. If possible, bring in members of the club. I never made a talk before a club without mentioning some of the members of the club. The club likes it and the members who are mentioned certainly get a great kick out of it.

In any talk you add to the interest when you talk about Jack Jones and his brothers, Bill and Sam. This is particularly true if the audience recognizes the names you mention. Many times when you say Jack Jones did something, a voice in the group calls out, "He would."

If there is anything in the news of the day to tie in with your story, bring that in. Anything that is good enough to get into the newspapers is good enough to interest this audience of yours. Last week in a talk down in Columbus, one of the men who was talking pulled out the morning newspaper and pointed to a story in it to prove a point he was making. To illustrate how the public is vitamin-conscious, a man talking to electric range salesmen uses a large envelope of clippings from newspapers and magazines, which have mentioned vitamins. He shakes the clippings out on the table, picks up a few of the stack, and reads the headlines. He says the public is vitamin-conscious and he proves that vitamins are news by his clippings.

You heighten any news effect if you localize your material. You read the local newspaper because it contains news of what

is happening at home to your neighbors and to you. Don't talk about what happened at the North Pole or in China if you can use Seventh and Main for your illustrations. Get as close as you can to the chair your listener is sitting in, and you will get a greater amount of his interest.

When you have your story written, check it over to see that you have a speaking high light on every page. By a speaking high light, I mean an anecdote, an idea, or a stunt. If you are to hold the interest of this audience of yours, you will have to be changing all of the time. Every few minutes something must happen. If you have a page of dull matter, put a wise-crack into that page or check to see if you can put more life in your language. One fellow I know has a fund of homely similes that lift his talk out of the rut. He spots these one to a page. You might get a dozen strong adjectives and sprinkle them through your talk.

Check also to avoid repetition. You will find in speaking that you have a habit of using one word over and over again. This tends to make your talk dull. Recently in looking over what I had written, I found that I had used the word "thing" twice in the same paragraph. I got out the Thesaurus and found over twenty words that might be substituted.

Testimonials can be used as high lights. Quote a statement or read a letter that will help sell the plan. If another organization is using the plan, describe its success. Make such illustrations practical. Talk about similar situations; stories about how a different type of club followed your plan may not help you with your group. If you go too far afield, members will say, "Perhaps that will work for that club, but that is no reason that it will work for us." Make your achievement story apply to the group.

Even though you have a perfect talk written, you have to give everything you have to putting it over. Watch your audience for they will tell you the minute you begin to be a bore. If the fat fellow down in front goes to sleep on you, don't

blame him, blame yourself—for letting him go to sleep. Change the tempo of your talk, waken him, and then keep him awake. If you can keep a sleepy fellow awake, you can certainly interest those who are more alert.

#### HOW TO KEEP INTEREST ALL THROUGH A TALK

Most speakers seem not to be able to watch audience reaction to their talks. They seem to feel that they are there to give a speech, and if the audience is indifferent or bored by the speech it is too bad. Such speakers courageously go on talking until it seems as if they are being paid by the word.

The good speaker watches this audience reaction. When the bald fellow in the first row looks out the window, when another behind him yawns, the good speaker uses an arouser—a device that gets back the bald fellow's attention or stifles that second or third yawn.

As has been suggested, a good speech has those arousers written in. Perhaps one to a page so that as the talk unfolds these devices pick up attention just as it starts to lag. But even a good speech may need a little more punch on certain occasions. That's where the arouser should be brought out. What are some of these devices? Well, here are a few of them.

#### HOW TO AWAKEN THE SLEEPY

Next time you give a talk watch the audience for signs of indifference. When they begin to fidget, or to show fatigue, try one of the following devices:

1. **TRY A CHANGE OF PACE.**—You can do this in your talking—if you have been whispering, start shouting. If you have been shouting, start whispering. If you have been talking fast, pause and start talking slowly.

2. **SHOW SOMETHING.**—Say, "Look at this." Then show a chart or exhibit, a piece of the product, or a newspaper page. When you turn a chart, you don't have to say, "Look at this," the mere act of turning a chart makes them look at you. Take something out of your pocket and hold it up—they'll look.

3. **START TELLING A STORY.**—That's always a sure-fire device. I don't mean a funny story particularly. A funny story will get back attention to you, but not perhaps to your subject. However, if you tell an anecdote about your plan that proves the point you are making, you get attention back to you and to your story as well.

4. **STOP TALKING.**—When you feel you have lost the interest of a portion of the group, just stop talking. Perhaps they want a rest from your voice droning on and on. When you stop talking, everybody looks at you to see what's up. With the attention recovered, start talking again.

5. **GET THE AUDIENCE TO DO SOMETHING.**—Ask them to do something. Ask for a show of hands; but this will not pull back attention as much as would some exercise. If you can get them to repeat a number of words after you, a slogan or a sentence, you will wake up all of them. One man talking will wake up the sleepy fellows next to them.

6. **DO SOMETHING YOURSELF.**—You can get back that lagging attention by putting a little more energy into your talk. You can wave your arms, you can take off your coat, or you can jump up and down. Any such pyrotechnics will bring back attention to you.

7. **TRY A WISECRACK.**—If you can fit in a wisecrack on the spur of the moment, try that. If it gets the barest response, the fellow who was not listening will ask his neighbor, "What did he say?" And he will start listening again so that he won't miss the next bon mot.

8. **CALL A RECESS.**—If the group seems tired, call a recess. If the subject matter is heavy, you may have to call recesses more often. When the group seems dead tired, give them a recess, and let them come back refreshed.

By following the suggestions given in this chapter, you can write your talk so that it will be interesting. But always be ready with devices that will get back attention. No matter how good your talk is, or how good you are as a speaker, there are many outside conditions that may affect the interest of your audience. It may be an unbearably hot day, the air in the

room may be bad, or the talk may come late in the day when the audience has been listening too long. All these make it more difficult to hold attention. But if you learn to watch the audience for those signs of fatigue and if you are prepared with arousers, you'll do a better job of holding attention.

A successful talk requires thought and plenty of work. The work starts before you get up on the platform, but don't stop working after the chairman introduces you. That is the time to put all you have into holding attention and into getting your story over.

Here again are a few suggestions for making your talk interesting:

1. Tell anecdotes, not necessarily funny ones. There is no appeal like "once upon a time."
2. Use gossip—what she said to you and what you said to her.
3. Put people into your illustrations, especially members of the club, and quote names, particularly names your audience knows.
4. Use news, as local as you can make it.
5. Put some life into your language.
6. Use testimonials. Tell what other clubs are doing with the same type of deal.
7. Shuffle these elements—now a story, then a snack of news, next some gossip, now a familiar name, and then a testimonial. Illustrate what Joe Whosit did and there you have it.
8. When you have the talk written, go over it, and check to see that on every page you have an arouser: a story, a bit of gossip, a familiar name, or something that will change the pace of the talk, something that might cause the audience member to awaken and start listening again.
9. And when they yawn or look out the window, pause and start a story. It is a sure-fire plan to get back that lagging attention.

## SAY WHAT YOU MEAN

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**S**PEAKERS WRITE their speeches. That's why you'll hear a speaker say, "can be accomplished," when he should say, "can be done." It is why a man will say, "prior to the war" when he should say, "before the war." It's what makes a speaker refer to "cessation of hostilities" when he should put it, "end of the fighting." He is speaking what he has written just as he is when he uses "purchase" for "buy" or "in a monetary way" for "dollars and cents" or "it's a rare occasion" for "seldom."

This written language used by a speaker helps to hide his meaning when usually he doesn't want his meaning hidden. Certain speakers talk like advertisements. They use such expressions as: "Rare indeed is such a tradition of supremacy"; or "The exclusive beauty of this authentic period cabinet"; or "New horizons of performance." Such words may sound pretty, but they don't help the member of the audience to an understanding of the message. Not long ago I heard a speaker say, "Wartime necessity produced technological advantages which are outstandingly evident." There is a mouthful that I couldn't resist writing down. But what does it mean? Remember when you are speaking to a group you want to make your meaning clear.

One way to make sure of clarity is to be specific. Say what you mean to say so that the audience knows what you mean. Don't say there are a myriad of industrial uses—tell what the uses are, and name them so that you can be sure they understand. How many times have you heard a speaker say that

something was protected from foreign substances. He meant that it was protected from dust and dirt, or moisture, or oil. How much better it would have been had he named the foreign substance.

Last month I heard a chairman introduce a speaker with, "Mastery of this exhaustive subject is not to be easily attained." The chairman was trying to say that this man was an expert, a more or less superexpert. How much better would it have been if he had said that the man was an expert among experts.

One evening last year I heard a speaker say, "Empirically speaking. . . ." I asked the six men sitting at my table what "empirically" meant. From each man I got a definition, and each one was different. I remember best the one that inferred "rule of thumb." The next day when I saw the speaker, I asked him what he meant by "empirically speaking." His answer was, "rule of thumb." If he had said that, everybody would have known what he meant.

One of my friends tells a story about hiring a young fellow to interview applicants for positions. The instructions he gave the young man were, "In this work you have to be objective."

At the end of the second day, he sent another executive in to ask the young man what he learned about interviewing applicants in the two days he had been on the job. The young man said, "Well, I think I am getting the hang of it. One thing I certainly do know is that I have got to be objectionable."

In the interest of clarity, you have to watch technical language. A salesman sold a woman an electric refrigerator. He gave her a fairly complete demonstration of the refrigerator, and when he was finished he asked her if she understood. She said she did, but she wasn't quite sure about defrosting.

"Oh, it is simple to do that," he said, "you simply cut it off." A month later the woman came into the showroom and the salesman saw her for the first time since the refrigerator had been delivered. "How do you like your refrigerator?" he asked.

"I like it fine except the defrosting," she said. "It seems to me there should be an easier way than cutting off that ice."

When the salesman said "cut it off," he meant turn off the electricity. If he had told the woman to turn off the electricity, or to pull the plug out of the wall, he would have made himself clear to her. But when he said "cut it off," all she could see was getting out the butcher knife and cutting the ice off the freezer.

Simple words can also help in building for clarity. I attended a meeting of sales managers not so long ago. During the day, I wrote down some words that I thought might have been left out of the talks with a resultant clarification of the subject matter. In the list I made there were thirty-seven such words. Now each of those words may mean exactly what the speaker wanted it to mean, but remember again he was speaking. Lots of times a speaker will say a word rather fast. If his word is unusual, the other fellow may not understand. Here is the list:

|              |            |               |
|--------------|------------|---------------|
| adverse      | acquaint   | devastating   |
| crucial      | culprit    | bruited       |
| perceive     | purveyors  | rendering     |
| foreseeable  | dispose    | dissemination |
| drastic      | divulge    | propensity    |
| complacently | gargantuan | projecting    |
| singular     | interval   | prosecuted    |
| minutely     | manifest   | intangible    |
| barrier      | import     | astute        |
| grievances   | encompass  | motivated     |
| blanketed    | stature    | objective     |
| perennial    | tertiary   | prohibit      |

A simple word or two could have been substituted for every word in that list. In a written piece those words may be all right, for people see the word when they read. But when you speak it's possible that a number of your listeners won't recognize the word spoken as one they would know in print.



Every now and then a man gets a bug on vocabulary building and may even buy a course on the subject. While he is working on the course, he acquires a number of words such as those on this list. As a mental exercise that is commendable, but I would like to offer a suggestion. If you are to do a lot of speaking, instead of building this kind of a vocabulary why not try to build a vocabulary which says what you mean in a way that listeners understand? In other words, take words such as those in the list and try to convey the same meaning in simple words.

In this talk of yours also watch for words that may have a different meaning to the other fellow. Just today a man said to me, "Display means one thing to me—and another thing to you." That's a good thing to watch. Be sure that the words you use mean the same thing to the people who hear them as they do to you.

Watch overwordage. So often a man will say, "sound, sensible, profitable" or "way, shape, or form" or "concrete, definite, specific." Then, too, many are afflicted with the additions such as, "if you please" or "so forth and so on."

After you have written the talk, go over it. Try to check it for words that mar the clarity. When you come to a big word, cut out the big word and try to convey the same meaning with one or more simple words that everybody will understand. As you look at the doubtful word ask yourself, "Do I use that one in conversation?" If not, substitute one of your spoken words for it. Remember you want to make yourself clear; you want them to understand. If you can't make them understand, why make this speech?

Here again are the suggestions for being specific.

1. Try to write your speech in spoken words—words that you can speak naturally and pronounce clearly.
2. Don't talk like an advertisement. Remember very few people ever say, "trouble-free service."

3. Try to be specific. Say exactly what you mean. Don't say a foreign substance if you mean a drop of oil.

4. Try to use words that are understandable when spoken. If it is quite likely that you will say a seven-letter word fast, cut it up into smaller words.

5. Work at vocabulary building, but try to build a vocabulary that conveys your meaning. Don't worry about the big words, worry about saying the same thing in little words that makes it clearer to the group.

6. Make sure that the words you use have the same meaning to the audience as to you.

7. After you have written your talk, go over it and check it for clarity. Ask yourself, will these people understand? If you feel they will, leave the script as is. If not, revise it.

8. Remember when you are making a talk, you are selling a plan and not parading your education.

9. Put every beautiful phrase to the acid test of "what does that mean?"

## PRACTICE HELPS

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WHEN YOU listen to a radio announcer, he sounds letter-perfect. He is reading from written script but not for the first time. He has read that script over and over again so that he will not stumble. His timing must be right. He must sound fresh and enthusiastic. He must emphasize the right points.

It would be well for you to do a little of that same thing with this talk you are making. Get the points in the right order, and put the emphasis where it is needed. Writing your talk is just the start; speak it too. Try it out on a small group of associates. Get it down pat, with the pauses, the emphasis, and even the gestures.

Some speakers can memorize their talk material, while others are confused when they try to remember words. How many times have you seen the speaker who was doing a memorized talk suddenly stop as if his mind has gone blank and he hadn't an idea in the world. He stands there lost, because he can't remember his words. Perhaps you can memorize, perhaps you can't. You have to decide which plan works best for you. Some of the best lectures you have ever heard were memorized. They were talks that men had given over and over again. Each portion of the talk had been studied for timing, emphasis, and the other factors that put it over. And every time the lecture was given, it rang the bell.

If you have one talk that you have given a number of times, you will, of course, do it almost from memory. Each time you

put it on, it is a rehearsal for the next. After you have given the talk three or four times, you will know exactly how to do it.

If you don't memorize, get the key points lined up in your mind. Mark the ones that you need to emphasize and the ones that can be slipped over hurriedly. Set these points up as guide posts and then practice giving your talk from the list of points.

When you get outside help in writing a presentation, remember that it is best to get it into your own words. Usually, you can't feel so strongly about a project if the material is written by someone else. Once I was helping a man rehearse a talk. I had written the lecture and he was to give it at a meeting that followed. The word "nutritious" was in the script and for the life of him the man couldn't pronounce the word. Every time he came to it, he stumbled over it. We deleted the word and he went on beautifully.

If you are lucky enough to have someone in the club to help you prepare the script for your presentation, study it and practice using it. Watch for words that you don't know or don't use regularly and substitute ones that you use every day. Part of your effectiveness, as you speak before groups, is your naturalness. If you use another's words, you may sound stilted or affected. Say your say in your own language, and you will get the best effect.

Another scheme is to get yourself steamed up about the subject. Study the thinking behind the plan and know as much about it as anybody else. You can give a good talk on any subject if you feel strongly enough about it to let your enthusiasm carry you away.

The practice idea applies to everything you are doing in this meeting of yours. If you are showing some charts, practice turning them over. They may be difficult to handle and it is well to know how before meeting time. Your talk, your demonstration, and your use of your exhibits are related to the room and the way the group is to be seated in that room. For this reason, it is a good idea to hold your practice sessions in the

room in which the meeting will be staged. Let's say the room has a stage or small platform. This means that a demonstration has to be done in a way that the audience can see it when it is done on the stage.

Practice using any gesture you plan to use in this presentation. You might do this before a mirror. Not long ago I had a talk in which I was explaining how the armed services taught a job. I wanted to use these words, "These people taught a job. If the man's job was to pull a lever, then count ten, and then pull another lever, that's what they taught him to do."

With these words, I wanted to use two gestures indicating that the levers were being pulled at the times indicated. At the start of the practice I raised my right hand and put it through the motions of pulling one lever, then I counted ten—"one, two, three, four—" raised my left hand, and indicated I was pulling the second lever.

The gestures were O.K. but I was using too much time in counting ten. When I finally worked out the thing for use before the audience, here's how it went:

"These people taught a job. If the man's job was to pull a lever" (my right hand reached up to pull the right lever) "then count—six, seven, eight, nine, ten—and pull another lever" (my left hand reached up to pull the second lever), "that's what they taught the man to do."

By practice I worked out both the presentation and the gesture and fitted the two together.

It is the same with any demonstration you will want to do. Work it out and practice doing it before you try it in front of your club. It is the same with any exhibit or presentation aid you use. Don't try to use a blackboard on which you can't write. Try beforehand to make sure the blackboard will take the chalk you have. Also, if you plan to erase, try that. How many times have you seen speakers before groups try to write on a blackboard with chalk that wouldn't write or try to erase what they had written with an eraser that wouldn't work!

In practicing with charts or a blackboard, remember that the audience is in front of you and you have the problem of keeping yourself facing the audience.

Practice using the room. If you are to talk from the stage, get up on the stage and look down at the audience before it is your time to talk. Get your bearings. If you can get in the hall before meeting time, it might be well to test out your voice. Speak from the stage to see how loud you need to speak to fill the hall. It is always well to talk a little louder than you need to.

Most of the fumbling you see before an audience comes because the speaker hasn't practiced. Don't make that mistake. Follow these suggestions for practice on preparations.

1. PRACTICE DOING YOUR TALK.—*a.* If you have written the script, read it over and over again. Try it out on your wife, your secretary, or others in the office. Get so that you know it.

*b.* If someone helped you write the script, give it even more study and substitute your own words for those unfamiliar to you. Try it aloud too.

2. REHEARSE USING ANY GESTURES YOU PLAN TO USE.—Rehearse yourself. Gestures wake you up and they help keep the audience awake.

3. IF YOU PLAN ANY DEMONSTRATIONS, PRACTICE THOSE TOO.—Practice using any aids you have. Turn your charts until you can do it smoothly.

4. PRACTICE THE WAY YOU USE YOUR HANDS.—If you are one of these speakers who keeps his hands in his pockets, practice the way you keep them in your pockets. It is best to have your hands free so that they can keep you alive and moving.

5. PRACTICE USING THE MEETING ROOM FOR YOUR SESSIONS.—Arrange the seating right. Get everything set up and practice using your presentation aids the way they are set.

## HAVE EVERYTHING READY

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I was at a meeting some months ago where a speaker planned to talk from a set of lantern slides. He made his preliminary remarks and came to that, "First slide, please. . . ." Nothing happened and he repeated his call for help. A third time he asked for the slide only to find much to his chagrin that the man assigned to run the projector was not present. After a few minutes of confusion, the operator was routed out of the bar, and the show went on. But there was a meeting stalled to a stop because everything was not ready. The projector was in place, the slides were ready to be put in place, but the operator was out of pocket.

As I sat through the confusion, I thought of George Jessel's act in which he explains why the regular man who runs the slide projector is absent because of a run-in with the police. Mr. Jessel's act was high comedy. He was after laughs and he got them. But when you are running a meeting you are not asking the audience to laugh at you, and therefore it will pay you to see that everything is ready. Don't start to hunt for your projectionist as a part of the meeting. Hunt him out beforehand, set him by the machine, and caution him to stay there.

Never take any kind of an exhibit into a meeting until you have looked it over and know how it should be shown. If it is a mechanical device, know how it operates. Before meeting time, take that collapsible easel which is supposed to work so beautifully out into the back room and see how it goes together before you try to assemble it before the group in the meeting.

It probably works with a simple flick of the wrist, if you know how to flick. Don't read the directions and think that you know how it works. Try to follow those directions once or twice or three times before you try it in front of an audience. Remember that people who write directions sometimes know the job so well that they don't give you enough instructions.

How many times have you sat in a meeting and heard the speaker say, "This is supposed to illustrate my point, but I have never worked it before"? Right then you lost interest. The man was supposed to be an expert; yet here he was announcing to one and all that he couldn't find right field.

What does your audience do when you fumble around with an exhibit? Usually they want to help. When the lecturer tries to make his sound slide-film projector work and admits that he never worked it before, he is in trouble. Immediately the tinkers in the audience want to get up and help him work it. Some do; the rest yawn or start talking, and the beautiful attention the speaker had a moment before has gone out the window.

I was in a meeting not too long ago in which the speaker was trying to sell a plan to a group. He had a good presentation and good exhibits, but he kept the audience completely in a state of confusion by the way he hunted for his materials. "I want to show you this circular," he would say. Then he would turn to pick up the circular, but lo it wasn't where he thought it was. "I had it here a minute ago," he apologized. If this speaker's aids had been laid on the table so that he could have picked them up in order, his session would have been close to perfect. However, every time he needed a piece he couldn't find it. He did beautifully the difficult job of telling his story, but he failed miserably on the simple job of organizing to tell it.

When you get your presentation aids ready, don't change them after you start your talk. You have seen the speaker who apparently had his set of charts arranged beforehand. Then after he is introduced, he moves the charts to another part of



the stage. You have also seen the man fumble with the microphone trying to adjust it. Usually this is caused by nervousness, for always if you notice the changes the speakers make, you find that they seem to make little difference. If it is a blackboard, the nervous nellie moves it about six inches, and you have a hard time figuring why it was moved at all.

Next, if you are one of these speakers who lean on the lectern, if there is one handy, get the lectern off the platform so that you won't be tempted by it. If you are inclined to lean against a table or half sit on it and dangle a leg over it, get the table out of there. Stand up when you make a talk. Don't lean or drape yourself on a chair or lean against the wall. Put your whole weight on your two feet and give out. Don't do anything sloppily.

Remember when you are up before a meeting, you can take away from what you say by what you do. If you are a short, fat fellow, don't try to do a job over your head. Don't reach up so that your vest parts company with your pants and shows a great expanse of shirt. If you are a large, fat fellow, don't stoop over too much. Fat fellows look funny stooping over. If you look awkward, the audience is likely to remember your awkwardness and not what you say. Make everything you do seem a touch of the finger, a twist of the wrist—simple, easy to do. Practice will get this for you. If there is a right way to perform a task, it is no doubt the way that makes it look easier to the audience.

Not long ago I saw a fellow with a set of charts on an easel. He was supposed to throw the charts over the back of the easel when he had finished talking from them. He threw the first chart all right, but when he threw the second one he did it with so much enthusiasm that the easel fell over. That got a laugh from the audience and it embarrassed the speaker no end. But he had only himself to blame. He should have braced that easel so that it wouldn't fall.

It pays to give a finished performance. Have everything

ready and your presentation can run smoothly. These suggestions will help you check.

1. Arrange your lectern or table in the place where you want it before you get up on the platform.
2. Arrange any exhibits you plan to show in order, so that you can find them when you want them.
3. Don't use an exhibit before an audience if you have never tried it before.
4. Never admit to the audience that you don't know how your mechanical exhibits work.
5. Don't ask the group to look at an object that can't be seen from all parts of the room.
6. If you are short and fat, don't do too much reaching up above your head. If you are a large, fat fellow, don't do too much bending over.
7. Remember when you are up before an audience, you are supposed to be an expert. Do only those things you can make look easy.
8. If you lean on a lectern or drape yourself over a table or chair, get such temptations out of your way.
9. Watch your clothes. Use a freshly pressed suit. Dress conservatively; you don't want your clothes to attract attention, you want your message to get the story over.

## GET YOUR BACK TO THE WALL

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IN A movie I was watching the other night, the bad guys came after the good guy—five of them. The first thing the hero did was to rush through them and get his back to a brick wall. When the fight started, he was set so that they would have to come at him from the front.

When you are presenting a plan before a meeting, take a tip from this movie hero—get your back to the wall, and have your audience, all of it, in front of you. Once in St. Paul I was running a meeting. The chairman of a group was sitting at a small table behind me. When I was well on my way, I noticed that I had lost the attention of the group. They were staring behind me at their chairman. I turned to look and there he sat trying to light a pipe with a mechanical lighter. I stopped my talk and joined the audience in watching him, and to tell the truth, he was so deeply engrossed in his problem that he didn't know the meeting was stopped.

When he came to, I asked him to take a seat in front of me. He did, and although he kept struggling with that pipe and cigarette lighter through the whole meeting he did not bother the audience again. When he was a part of the audience, they didn't see him, his pipe, and his lighter. Behind me he was a menace because he could attract more attention than I could, and he proceeded to do just that.

Yes, get your back to the wall. Have nobody behind you. Imagine trying to talk on a stage beside a cage full of active

monkeys. You wouldn't have much chance. The audience would give their full attention to the animals. It is the same with men, women, and children. Let's say the chairman sits beside you. If you make a statement, the audience looks at the chairman to see how he takes it. If he scowls, they think he isn't too enthusiastic about you as a speaker. If he nods his head, that may be helpful, but the point is that they are not giving you their full attention, some of it is going to your chairman.

Once when I asked the president of a group, who planned to sit up beside the speaker, to sit down in front of me, he explained, "Why, I want to see how they take it."

"You can do the same in the back of the room," I suggested. Reluctantly he moved, but after the meeting he admitted, "I believe it works better that way."

Not so long ago a chairman sat behind a speaker in a meeting I attended. All through the speaker's talk, he kept making notes on a small pad of paper. His notes had nothing at all to do with the talk—you could see that by the rapidity with which he wrote. Afterward I asked him what he was doing and he told me, "I was making out my expense account."

A lot of officers of clubs sit behind the speakers, because that is the custom. Some of them, of course, do it because they want to show that they are officers. How often have you seen the president and the secretary carry on a conversation or take care of some of the club work while the guest speaker is talking? That's discourteous, and it takes attention away from the speaker. If they have to do that work during meetings, they could do it in the back of the hall and nobody would notice.

If you have trouble getting your chairman to sit out in the audience, you might set up the room so that nobody possibly can be behind the speaker. Don't put a chair up there and don't put a table up there. The scheme I use is to give the chairman a job in the audience. I say, "Bill, I want you to help me on a test. I want to know how this talk goes over with the group

and I would like you to sit in this seat (I point out a seat about in the center of the room) and glance at the men from time to time. Then afterwards report to me on how it went over."

An assistant helping you set up your presentation aids can be just as much trouble as your chairman. The other day I saw a speaker ask an assistant to write some data on a blackboard while he talked on another subject. That gave the men in the audience two men to watch. If you have an assistant who is going to help you in your presentation, don't seat him on the platform beside you so that the audience can look him over while you talk; and for goodness' sake, don't have him stand like a dummy beside you. Place him in the audience and have him come up when it is time for him to do his bit. Then while he talks, you take a seat in the audience. Don't sit up there soaking up some of the spotlight. Let him have the full attention of the group.

The arrangement of the meeting room can steal attention from you. A number of suggestions for room arrangement are given in Chap. 4. But always try to seat the audience so that nothing outside the meeting room can bother them.

If you seat persons so that they can look out windows, they will, of course, look out the windows. If they can see an entrance, they will watch all activity at the entrance. Whenever you have anything to do with the arrangement of the room, set up so that the audience can't see much of the room behind the speaker. A windowless corner of the room is ideal for this. With a little thought, nine times out of ten you can arrange tables at a luncheon or dinner so that the speaker has the full attention of the group. This same rule applies to his presentation aids. Don't set them up in the middle of a stage or of a large room. Give the aids a background of a screen or two.

If you are to talk from a head table, the people seated at the table will, of course, steal attention from you. To prove this point in talks I make over the country, I move the head table

out from behind me. This makes a hit with the audience and it gets a laugh, for somehow twelve or fifteen big shots look funny moving out from behind the speaker. The exodus of the disgruntled makes a point that is important to the speaker; he should have that spotlight alone.

Next time you are at a meeting where they have a guest speaker and a head table, notice what the men at the head table do. One lights a cigarette, another a cigar, a third talks to his neighbor, and a fourth writes on the tablecloth. One of the reasons for this is that these men are not in position to look at the speaker or at any exhibits he shows. They are a liability to the speaker and there is little reason why they should be there except that every club has officers who feel they have a right there and workers who should be rewarded for the work they do by being placed at the head table. It is a custom that we are stuck with, and therefore we have to make the most of it.

Once I was in a vaudeville house noted for its tough audience. A girl singer was not going so well. From the gallery a penny came bouncing down on the stage, then another and another, and finally a shower of them. The girl stopped her song, she stilled the music. "Give me a chance," she shouted to the gang up near the roof. The audience liked her pluck. The rain of coins stopped and the girl went on. Before she was through, she had that audience with her. When her act was finished, she got as much applause as anyone on the bill.

Give me a chance—that's your plea when you stand up in front of this meeting of yours. Get your back to the wall, and get the chairman, the secretary, the brass hats, or anything that distracts attention away from behind you or even from beside you. Get the spotlight on you alone. Having undivided attention helps you to put your story over.

To sum up, here are some suggestions for getting the full spotlight on you.

1. If possible, get your chairman to take a seat in the audience.
2. If the chairman objects to sitting in the audience, give him a job to do that requires him to be seated there.
3. Don't have an assistant working behind you setting up presentation aids while you talk.
4. Make sure that your meeting room is set up so that the audience can't see an entrance or look out the windows.
5. Don't allow anything moving to go on behind you while you try to hold interest with a talk.
6. Don't do a talk from a head table if you can possibly avoid it. Move yourself and your speaking aids to another end of the room.
7. If you are using presentation aids, have a background for them so that attention is focused on the aids.

## KEEP SOMETHING UP YOUR SLEEVE

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ANTICIPATION HELPS. If you can keep this meeting of yours guessing as to what is coming next, you can help your presentation. What's behind the big blank sheet of paper? What's he got under the big cover? In a stage play the curtains open and there is the scene, the actors, and the scenery. They weren't sitting there for you to see while the act ahead went on. No, they were thrown at you quickly like a picture on the screen. And while they were on the stage they kept your full attention; no part or parcel of what was to come was there for you to see.

Take a tip from the stage when you run your meetings. Never tip your hand, never show a presentation aid until you are ready to use it. Conserve its news value. If the exhibit you have gives the audience information that is new to them, keep it out of sight until the exact minute when its appearance will have the most dramatic effect.

Not so long ago I heard a speaker say, "Now I am going to show you a chart." Then he proceeded to explain a chart that had been on the stage beside him for all to see. Thus, he wasn't showing anything new. All his picture value was gone. Of course, he still had the news value of the story on what he wanted them to see on this chart, but the "ohs" and "ahs" that would have accompanied an unveiling were completely lost.

There is another disadvantage in having a presentation aid



in full view of the meeting when you are talking about something else. While you talk on, the group studies what it can see. In a recent meeting I heard one fellow whisper to another, "The figures on that chart are haywire." The speaker was not talking about the chart. He was on another phase of the subject. But the chart and its figures were in full view and this member of the audience was studying what he could see. If the chart had been covered or out of the way he might have been following what the speaker said.

Perhaps at some time during your talk you plan to show a set of figures. If you put up those figures on a blackboard where the group can see them, the audience will absorb some of the message before you get around to it, and what is more they may get the wrong impression. Remember I see some figures and get one idea, but the fellow next to me sees them and gets another idea. Neither may be the one you want us to have. But if you cover the figures after you put them on the blackboard, we are certain to wonder what you have up there. Then when you are ready to talk about the figures you snatch off the cover. Now we see the figures at the exact time you explain what you want us to see.

You can add to this suspense by what you don't say. For instance, never promise, "I am going to talk about that a little later." Your audience hopes that the session will be finished a little later. Thus, your statement is a disappointment to them. And yet in almost every meeting at some time a speaker promises to cover something in a minute. Now there is no sense in that at all; the audience is not worrying because you are not covering a subject fully. They are having trouble enough listening to and absorbing what you say. You may know that you should give a certain phase of the subject better coverage, but they will not notice if you skip that phase altogether. So don't tell them what you are going to tell them in a minute, concentrate on what you are telling them now.

There are many ways that you can build up this anticipa-

tion in your meetings. Let's take a simple presentation aid like a chart and review what can be done with it.

1. Cover it with a sheet of paper.
2. Turn the back of the chart to the group until you are ready to show it.
3. Lay the chart flat on a table until you are ready to use it.
4. If you have a stage with curtains, open the curtain at the time you want to show the chart.
5. If you have more than one chart, open the curtains a bit wider to show the next chart. Always cover the chart you have used unless you need it for a résumé, or it helps build up your story.
6. Put your charts on glass slides so that you will get a greater enlargement and you can show only one at a time.
7. Build your chart before the audience with strips of colored paper against a white card, the strips to represent the different figures you want to show.

These are simple things you can do to keep a common aid like a chart under cover until you need it. Yet it is the usual practice for speakers to talk with a number of charts in plain view.

You know there is always something interesting about an unveiling, the opening of a package, or the breaking of a seal on an envelope. Whenever you have anything to show in a meeting, use the dramatic effect of unveilings to heighten anticipation.

If an assistant is to help you in a part of your presentation, don't introduce him ahead of time. Wait until you need him and then give him a good introduction.

If you have more than one presentation aid to show, bring them on one at a time. If you have eight aids to show, uncover each at the proper moment. Cover up the first aid you showed while you show the second. Give each its place in the sun. If you want to bring them all together for a résumé at the end,

do that. But when you are talking about one aid, don't have the others there to steal attention from it.

In using exhibits take a tip from the side-show barker, who shows you only so much. Don't give the audience something to study while you talk about another subject. Try to keep something up your sleeve.

Here are some suggestions for building up anticipation in your meetings.

1. Keep all presentation aids under cover until you are ready to use them.
2. Don't introduce the assistant who is to help you until he is needed. The same applies to a committee.
3. If you have a number of aids to show, bring them out one at a time.
4. Cover the aid you have used while you show the next one.
5. Don't allow two charts to show at the same time unless you need both at the same time. Try to concentrate attention on the chart you are showing.
6. Never promise to do something in a minute. Remember that the audience wants to go home in a minute.

## DEAL THE AUDIENCE A HAND

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WE ENJOY taking part—singing in the movies, applauding, heckling, cheering, whistling. That's why one of the surest ways to make your meeting a success is to get your audience to take part. Let them talk, demonstrate, play, act, and shift scenery. They will love it and they will be more interested in the plan you are presenting.

It's not easy to get people to take part in your meeting. It is a difficult job that requires practice, skill, and determination. That last is important. Not long ago a man who was running a series of meetings in which it was important that he get the audience to ask questions told me, "I can't get them to open up. I ask for questions and they sit there looking at me. People in this part of the country are different."

We discussed what he had been doing and how, and agreed that at the meeting that night he would fight for this audience participation. If they didn't come through the first time he asked, he would keep on asking until they did, even if it took all night. His first request got no results, and neither did his second. On his third, one fellow broke down, and with that the response built up until it far exceeded our fondest expectations. After the meeting he was enthusiastic, "When I got them started I had a time shutting them off," he said. In previous meetings he hadn't kept after them. He had asked, they had refused, and he had quit—no hits, no runs, no errors.

That story illustrates the first rule in audience participation—you need persistence. At times this audience of yours is as

cold as ice, sitting on their hands, dead, almost hostile. And you have to put the breath of life into them. Once at a meeting in Baltimore, I watched an experienced speaker thaw out an audience. The group was made up of retail salespeople from the stores in town. When the meeting opened, the audience straightened in their chairs and folded their arms across their chests. It was as if they were challenging the speaker, "We dare you to interest us."

The speaker had been around. Did he start with his prepared speech? He did not. Instead he started to talk about the strong silent customer who stands in front of the counters of their stores, who will not answer a question, who will not indicate that she has heard it. She just stands there and looks until the salesperson wonders if she can hear or speak. The speaker worked on this picture until he had a few of his audience smiling. But that wasn't enough. He wanted all of them smiling, so he went on to describe what they would like to do to that customer—push the counter over on her toes, shove her down the elevator shaft, and so on. They couldn't do those things, however, because she was a customer and the customer was always right. He stayed with that customer until he had all of them smiling.

Then he stated that he was in the same boat standing up there before them. He was a salesman. They were the silent customers. If this meeting was to be a success, they had to take part in it. They had to open up and talk to him. But here they were, sitting like cold stone statues, daring him to make them smile. They were going to smile, he promised, and talk, and take part too.

Then he asked them to stand up. He would put them through an unbending exercise, he said, and that's what he did. He got them to raise their hands above their heads. Then he directed them in wriggling their fingers, now open, now closed. He got them to put their hands down and do the same exercise; then up again and wiggle; then down again and wig-

gle. When he had finished, they were completely loosened up, laughing, relaxed, and ready for his talk.

Once I watched another speaker loosen up an audience by getting everybody to frown. He told them that when he got up to speak everybody was frowning at him, and for no reason. They didn't know him, they had not heard him talk, after his talk they might have reason to be sore at him, but not before he had uttered a word. And their scowls were not so good either, but he would fix that, he would show them how to scowl. Then he took them through a frowning exercise. He asked them to frown at him, to imagine he was their landlord, the tax collector, anybody they didn't like. He got them to frown, but he wasn't satisfied with that first try. He got them to try again, to frown again and again. He kept it up until they were all laughing and relaxed.

In any of these audience participation stunts, it is not enough to have them do something once. Even having them say, "Good evening, Mr. Hegarty," is much better if you have them do it a number of times. Have them say, "Good evening." Then say, "You can do it better than that—come on now, louder." Don't consider that second try satisfactory either. Make the audience do it again and again until everybody is taking part.

When you try to get the audience to participate, be sure that they understand exactly what you want them to do. Notice in that illustration above that I first asked them to say, "Good evening, Mr. Hegarty." I didn't ask them to say it as loud as they could or to shout it. Yet if you want them to shout, explain that when you give them the instructions.

You can get audiences to repeat quite elaborate statements after you. In one of my talks on the use of simple language, I have the audience repeat these five simple proverbs: "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush"; "A stitch in time saves nine"; "A miss is as good as a mile"; "A new broom sweeps clean"; "All's well that ends well."

In this stunt I say the first two words of the proverb and

have them repeat the remainder. At the start I tell them that I have five proverbs they all know. Then I explain that I am going to say the first two words and I want them to repeat the remainder.

Always when I say, "A bird . . .," the audience mumbles the rest. But that is my fault, I haven't explained fully what I want them to do.

Now I explain further, "No, I want you all to say it—loud. Come on now, all together—A bird. . . ." This time they do it louder and more participate, but not loud enough. So I have them do it once more, and this time, I ask them to shout and almost all of the audience participates.

Getting your audience to do something or to say something is a great help when they have sat in a meeting on a hard seat for a long time and they are about to go to sleep on you. You can always awaken them by asking them to answer a question, by calling somebody up to say something, or by getting the group to do some exercise. When you feel that they are dead tired, deal them a few cards and watch them wake up.

If you want the answer to a question from the audience, make that question as specific as you can. Don't ask a group of women, "What don't you like about your cookstove?" if you want to know what they don't like about the oven of the stove. In such a case the question should be, "What don't you like about the oven of your cookstove?"

When a guest makes a statement at your request, repeat it so that all in the meeting can hear it. The guest is not facing them and may not have spoken loud enough for all to hear. If they can't hear, they lose interest. If you repeat so that all can hear, their interest will be held, and further you get a chance to point up the statement made by the guest. In addition to that, when everybody hears, you get more people to take part. Other members of the audience feel that they, too, are good enough to give ideas—if Sadie can, why can't I?

In meetings where you are trying to teach the group how

to solicit for members or funds, you can have the members help you demonstrate how it is done. Have one man come up front and make the solicitation to him. Then change places and have him solicit you. Such demonstrations show the audience they too can do this solicitation that you do so well.

When you have a meeting that needs audience participation and you are among strangers, it might be well to make friends with one of the guests before the meeting. Select one that looks friendly and cooperative and talk to him before the meeting starts. You don't need to tell him that you will call on him later, but get from him enough background material so that when you do call on him later he will respond readily.

In staging any audience participation, never get a laugh at the expense of a volunteer. Always be as helpful as you can, even assisting with the answer to your questions. This encourages others.

You can have a more successful meeting if you deal the audience a hand. Let them cheer, applaud, whistle, and talk. They'll love it, they'll have a good time, and what is more they will take more home from your meeting.

These suggestions will help you get audience participation in your meetings.

1. When you want the audience to do something, keep on asking. Keep after them until you get them to do what you want them to do.
2. In any stunt such as saying, "Good evening" to you, don't stop when the audience has done it once. Tell them the first attempt can be bettered and have them do it over and over again until everybody is taking part.
3. Make sure that they understand what you want them to do. If possible, demonstrate. If you want them to tell a story, illustrate with a similar story.
4. Make your request as simple and specific as possible.
5. Repeat any statement a guest makes so that all the audience hears it.



6. Always set the stage when you ask a member of the audience to play a part. If the man is supposed to solicit you for funds, explain that you are the prospective donor, and that he is the solicitor.

7. Never do the following under any circumstances:

- a. Get a laugh at the expense of a volunteer.
- b. Criticise the way a volunteer does anything.
- c. Make fun of anything the volunteer says or does.

## DON'T COMPETE WITH ANYTHING

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THE SPEAKER holds up the object for you to see. He says, "This is the new metal." You are looking at the metal. He has your attention. Then he says, "Here, you pass it around among you and look at it."

Then he goes on to the next point, but does his audience go along with him? It does not. One fellow takes the sample and looks at it. He speaks to the brother next to him about the piece. Gone is the attention of these two. Because they are talking, the attention of others near them is also lost, for they try to hear what the two say, try to see what they see. Maybe the speaker gets back the attention, maybe he doesn't. But the loss is his own fault. He has set up that competition himself.

There is a way to pass around that object you want the group to examine without losing attention. Hand it to a man in the center of the room where most of the group can see it. Have this man stand up with the sample and do your demonstration with you. Then take back the sample, and let the group know that it will be available for examination after the meeting. But don't have anything passing around among your audience while you try to talk about something else.

Another attention thief is that envelope of printed matter that you pass out to members before the session starts. That happens at so many of the meetings at which the committee is organizing for a drive. Not long ago I heard the chairman of

such a meeting say, "Before I forget it, I want all of you to have this envelope of instruction material, application blanks, and the other stuff you will need." Then he passed out the envelope. When he saw that everybody had an envelope, he started to talk. Vainly he tried to drown out the rustle of the papers. And since he had put eight or ten pieces of printed matter in the envelope, he had a long wait until he had a chance at the attention of the group. If he had been wise, he would have started over and repeated everything he had said while they were exploring that envelope. None of them would have known that he was repeating. But he had asked for inattention when he passed out that envelope, and his request had been granted.

There is a way to use that envelope of printed matter in your meeting. You will find a number of suggestions in Chap. 37.

Another bad habit speakers have is to send an assistant into the audience to work on a film projector, to set up an easel or blackboard, or to do some similar job. That always steals attention from the speaker. Remember always that no matter what the other man is doing it is much more interesting than your speechmaking, and that goes no matter how good an orator you are. If the assistant has to tinker with a projector, call a recess while he does it. Don't allow him to putter while you are trying to hold attention with your talk. Certainly time is important, and you want to conserve all you can. But attention is even more important.

One day last year I was doing a talk in a hotel dining room. Right when I was doing great guns a waiter walked from the back of the room up to the speaker's table, took a water pitcher off of the table in front of me, and walked out of the room with it. Naturally, I stopped while he did this chore. There was nothing else I could do. The audience was interested in what he was doing, and I knew that I couldn't compete for their attention.

If the secretary of the boss comes into the room while you

are speaking, pause while she whispers to him. The group wants to hear what she is whispering anyway. If a parade is going by the hotel on the street outside, stop talking while the bands pass by. You can't compete with such things. One of my ministerial friends tells a story about the bat that got into the church while the Bishop was speaking. The Bishop was well into his sermon when the bat attracted by his shiny bald head zoomed dangerously close. Instinctively, the Bishop ducked, but went on without losing a phrase. The bat gained altitude and dived again, zoomed upward and back, again and again, buzzing the pulpit and its occupant. But bat or no bat, the Bishop had come to preach a sermon. Bravely and doggedly he talked on, but it was a losing battle. Attention of the congregation was concentrated on the bat. The words of the sermon were hardly heard. When the bat first appeared, the speaker should have started on his closing paragraph. It was the only thing he could do.

As has been said before, when you are up before a group you should have undivided attention. Certainly you wouldn't try to make a speech while a portable radio beside you gave off with hot music. Yet time and again you see speakers set up competition that is just as disconcerting or try to talk while some outside disturbance steals attention from them.

When you put on this meeting of yours, try to be the whole show. You'll have competition for attention anyway. Somebody will drop something on the floor, the fire sirens will sound off, one fellow will borrow a match, or another will light his pipe. You can't help such things; but you should know that you can't talk in competition with a major disturbance, and you shouldn't set up any disturbance yourself. So watch your step—don't compete with anything.

Here again are these suggestions on how to cut down competition for attention.

1. Don't pass out anything for the audience to examine while you talk.

2. Don't pass out that envelope full of printed matter before you talk if you expect them to pay attention.
3. Don't allow an assistant to move about among the audience or to set up presentation aids while you are talking.
4. Don't try to compete with outside disturbances such as a waiter, a secretary, or a parade.

## WHAT TO DO ABOUT NOTES

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THE OTHER day we were sitting in a rather dull meeting and a new speaker was introduced. As he stepped to the platform, he took a sheaf of papers out of his pocket. "For cryin' out loud," the man next to me muttered, "that guy will be talking this time tomorrow."

And from the size of the manuscript, it seemed that the man's prediction would come true. Scaring the audience with notes is a common practice among speakers; and there is no sense in it. The audience always hopes that you will make it quick and fast. When you display voluminous evidence that you don't intend to get out of there in a hurry, you discourage them no end.

Whenever possible, I try to get my notes set on the lectern before I get up to talk. Then the audience has no inkling of how long I'll be there. Sometimes I ask the chairman to place my notes for me. He usually is carrying notes of his announcements or of the biographical material of his speakers. He can put your notes in place on the lectern without attracting undue attention to them.

In one of my talks about giving a speech I give an imitation of the man who uses cards as notes. I use a deck of playing cards in this act. I hold them with my two hands in front of me as most speakers do. My talk goes, "You have all seen the speaker who has his notes on cards. He holds them like this with two hands in front of his fat tummy. He is going beautifully on his talk and then suddenly—silence. Slyly he glances

at his hands and the cards in them. A smile of relief lights his face—the card on top is the ten of hearts—he raises his head, and again his golden voice booms out.” That stunt gets a laugh, for all of my audience have seen a speaker do just that.

In doing this stunt, I wind up by shuffling the cards and saying, “Then what happens when the speaker does this?” They laugh, because they can see what would happen. I had been doing this stunt for years to illustrate the point that a speaker shouldn’t use card notes, when one day at a meeting I saw a speaker shuffle his cards. The speaker was nervous, he had his notes on cards, and when he put the first card on the bottom he glanced at the second and started to shuffle. You can imagine his discomfiture when he saw what he had done. He fumbled with the cards a while, tried to talk and sort them at the same time, and when he had himself as completely confused as a man can be, he tossed the notes on the speaker’s table and went on talking sans notes.

From this you can see that I advise against using card notes. The deck of cards tips off the audience that there is a lot more coming. Always the audience worries too much about the number of cards, they hope you are using a pinochle deck and not the full fifty-two card pack.

When you use cards for your notes, don’t make your notes so complete that they can serve as a manuscript for your talk. I have seen men write out their talks on four-by-six-inch cards and call those cards their notes. When you do that, the temptation is to read from the cards rather than use them as notes. And since such notes must be typewritten single space, they are difficult to read.

When you use a manuscript as your notes, lay it flat so that it is out of sight of the audience. If you plan to turn the pages as you talk, try to conceal this movement so that the audience can’t see how many pages there are. Instead of turning the top page, slide it off the top and lay it aside. Most lecterns have rails which allow you to conceal such a movement.

Never deprecate your notes. How often have you heard a

speaker say, "My notes today are a bit rambling." There is no sense in such an admission. If your notes are rambling, you should have organized them so that they didn't ramble. And besides, that is your business. Why should the audience be interested in the inadequacy of your notes? They will find out when you make the talk, and perhaps they might not notice that the notes are incomplete.

Put your notes in one place, and leave them there. Don't worry the audience by picking them up and laying them down. Either let them lay or hold them where you can refer to them. You have seen the speaker who picks up his notes, lays them down, picks them up again, and so on all through his speech. Usually he does that because he is nervous. At times in front of an audience, I find myself doing that and always I note that some of the audience is following the movement of my hands. There is no reason why they should follow the movement of my hands—such movement doesn't help my talk. So I put down the notes, stick my hands in my coat pockets, or gesture with them.

Last month I attended a meeting in which the speaker laid the notes for his talk on a table behind him. Then all through the meeting he kept turning his back to the audience to consult those notes. There was a table in front where he could have laid his notes, but they had used that for other exhibits. If he had reversed the arrangement, his talk would have been better. Don't put your notes behind you. Even though your coat fits perfectly in the rear, you don't look too good with your back to the audience.

How long has it been since you heard a speaker who talked to his notes? The man has his notes, usually quite elaborate ones, and he is so afraid that he will miss the next point that he doesn't lift his head to look at the audience. He talks to his notes instead of the paying customers. Don't talk to your notes—remember the people came to hear you, you can talk to the notes at home.

The man who carries his notes with him as he moves about



among his presentation aids and who refers to his script every now and then gives the impression that he doesn't know his subject. When you have a number of exhibits to show and are not too familiar with what to say about each, make notes of what to say on small cards and fasten the cards to the exhibits. If the meeting arrangements are such that you have to carry your notes, shift them from one hand to the other. You look awkward with one hand anchored by the notes and the other trying to take care of all gestures.

Don't fumble with your notes. Don't say that you want to show a clipping from the newspaper to the audience and then fumble through your notes looking for the clipping. Don't reach in one pocket and then another searching for the small card you want to show them. In my talk on "How to Run a Meeting" to illustrate this point, I fumble through my notes looking for an exhibit, and I search through my pockets, but the audience doesn't seem to think that unusual. They have seen too many speakers do it.

They have also seen the fellow who stops his talking to study his notes. This gentleman is one of the worst offenders. He should have studied those notes at home, not up before this meeting. He turns over a page and then he stands looking. It is as if he had never seen that page before. If you can't read your own writing, have someone else write your notes. It is always well to have your notes typewritten, if possible have them done in the larger size typewriter type.

Many speakers use charts as the notes of their talk. By doing this they give the audience something to look at at intervals, but they also have an outline of their talk. When they have said all they can think of about the chart showing, they turn to the next chart and talk about that. Such charts do not have to tell the audience anything, they simply guide the speaker. Charts of any kind can be marked with notes that remind the speaker of what he is to say about each.

A speaker can mark his manuscript so that it can serve as

notes. One way to do this is to use a large blue pencil and write the notes in large letters on the pages. The speaker can glance at the large letters and pick up the thought expressed in that paragraph.

Here again are some suggestions for handling your notes.

1. Don't pull the manuscript of your talk out of your pocket when you first get up on the stage. No sense scaring the audience.

2. Get your notes set on the lectern before you get up to talk. If possible have the chairman plant them for you.

3. Don't use a deck of cards for your notes. The audience worries about how many you have, and then you might shuffle them.

4. If possible lay your notes flat on a table or lectern and don't allow the audience to see them. Slide off the top page of the manuscript instead of turning it over and putting it on the bottom.

5. Don't put your notes on a table in back of you, or on a table so far at the side that you have to turn to look at them. Usually you can get a little table to place in front of you.

6. If possible, don't carry your notes as you move about among your presentation aids. Pin notes to the aids instead.

7. Don't make your notes so complete that you will be tempted to read them as you talk.

8. If you have to hold your notes in your hand, shift them from one hand to the other so that you can gesture with either hand.

9. If you carry your notes, don't wave them at the audience.

10. Don't worry the audience by continually laying down and picking up your notes.

11. Don't fumble through your notes searching for something you want to show the audience.

12. Don't stop talking to study your notes. Try using charts as the outline of your talk and also as your notes.

13. If you are talking from a set of charts, make your notes on the charts where you can see them but the audience can't.

14. Mark your manuscript with headlines so that you can pick up the idea without reading typewriter type.

15. Make your notes headlines—one word if possible. Then when you refer to the notes, you won't have to pause while you figure out what it means.

The idea of all these suggestions is to help make your talk a more finished presentation. When you make a speech, you want the audience to concentrate on what you are telling them and showing them. When you worry them with your notes, you take away from your main purpose.

My favorite method of handling notes is to use an outline chart. This is made on a sheet of heavy paper about nine by twelve inches. The sheet is ruled off in two-and-one-quarter-inch squares. Then in the small squares, I write the outline of the talk. I lay this flat on the table in front of me and for all purposes the audience is not aware that I have any notes. An illustration of the outline chart for one of my talks is shown on page 173.

Notes for your talk should be headlines as brief as possible. Note the third square in my outline. "Good guys—bad" reminds me to tell about the good guy I had seen in the movies. The bad guys came after him and the first thing he did was to rush through them and get his back to the wall. "St. Paul" reminds me to tell the anecdote about what happened at a meeting in St. Paul.

Note how many of the reminders are one word. The squares with notes like "Get your back to the wall" are reproductions of the printing on the charts I use. These charts are actually notes for the talk. Note the first square in the second row at the left. Those words, just as you see them, are printed on the chart. Such a chart tells the audience little, but the words remind me to tell the rules for making a speech interesting given in Chap. 23. Your notes can help you make a better presentation. Use them as an aid, not as something to worry the audience.

## OUTLINE OF TALK — HOW TO RUN A SALES MEETING

|  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <i>What a<br/>sales meeting<br/>is</i>   | <i>Get your<br/>back to<br/>the wall</i>   | <i>Good guys-bad<br/>St. Paul<br/>Assistant<br/>Room/<br/>Milwaukee/<br/>Head table</i> | <i>Interest<br/>them</i>   |
| <i>Story<br/>Gossip<br/>News<br/>People<br/>Language<br/>Dramatize</i>               | <i>Keep<br/>them<br/>awake<br/>with<br/>Variety</i>  | <i>Vaudeville/<br/>Ball of fire/<br/>Pail of water/<br/>30 meetings</i>                 | <i>Don't<br/>fumble/<br/>—<br/>Notes/<br/>Time</i>   |
| <i>Demonstrator<br/>Don't know<br/>Hunting<br/>Yourself<br/>Suspenders<br/>Specs</i> | <i>Charts<br/>Janitor<br/>Covered<br/>Position<br/>Light<br/>Study<br/>Introduction<br/>Practice</i>     | <i>Deal<br/>them<br/>a<br/>hand</i>   | <i>clinging<br/>Show of hands/<br/>Say something<br/>Exercise/<br/>Make it clear<br/>Rooster</i> |
| <i>Don't<br/>compete<br/>with<br/>anything</i>                                       | <i>Waiter/<br/>Secretary/<br/>Parade/<br/>Your own fault/<br/>Literature/<br/>Samples/<br/>Assistant</i> | <i>Don't<br/>be too<br/>funny</i>   | <i>Audience/<br/>relaxed/<br/>Small boy/<br/>Make point<br/>3-story plan</i>                     |
| <i>End in<br/>high</i>   | <i>Piddle out<br/>Brotherhood and so<br/>What do I want<br/>Clam and first</i>                           | <i>Exercise/<br/>Wind up</i>  |  |

## READING YOUR SPEECH

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NOT so long ago as we came out of a meeting, I heard this conversation, "Good speech, wasn't it?" one man said.

"Yeah, but he read it," another put in.

"I know," the first agreed, "but he did a good job of reading."

Now that was true. The man had done a good job of reading his speech. Because he did well with his reading he did not bore his audience as much as the usual speech reader. But still he read the speech, and I'm sure that he had only about half of the attention that he might have had if he had left that manuscript at home.

An audience seldom gets enthusiastic about a speech that is read; that is, unless the reader is experienced and knows how to read a speech. If you are the common, garden variety of speaker it is better not to read your speech. That is the point I want you to get from this. Still, if you must read, don't get discouraged. If you have to cover a lot of ground in a short time and don't want to appear hurried, if you are making a statement of policy, reading a scientific paper, or substituting for another, you may have to read. I'll admit there are times when you must read. But when they come, don't expect to "wow" that audience. Recognize the fact that a reader won't be liked nearly as much as a speaker doing the same talk. Remember too that you have to work harder to be good than the fellow who talks his speech.

Once I was at a meeting substituting for my boss. He was

billed on the program, but since he was down with the flu I was assigned to make the talk. About the first thing the secretary asked me was, "Do you have a copy of Mr. Boss's speech?"

He took it for granted that since I was a substitute, I was going to read the remarks of the man I was pinch-hitting for. "No, I don't have a copy," I told him.

"Then you are not going to read his speech?"

I told him that I was not going to read and somehow he seemed disappointed. He was thinking of those proceedings which he had to print and not at all about the audience which had to listen.

Not long ago a man who was to speak before a state association asked me to look over his speech. I suggested some changes and he said, "But I have to read this."

"Why?" I asked.

"The group prints proceedings," he explained.

Don't let the fact that this association prints proceedings get you to read your speech. Get your speech typed just as you want it to appear in the proceedings, and then make your talk with complete disregard of what you have written. Give the secretary the typed manuscript and it will appear in the proceedings. If the group has a girl taking down your talk or it is being recorded, don't let that bother you. Ask the secretary to send you the manuscript for correction. Most associations do that anyway.

Well, if you are stuck with a speech that you have to read, here are a few suggestions. Don't apologize for reading. Don't preface your talk with such statements as, "My remarks are rather rambling, they cover such a variety of subjects that I thought it would be better if I read them." If you are stuck with reading, read and don't apologize. The audience feels as badly about it as you do. They feel imposed upon; they resent it enough without being reminded that you know it isn't doing right by them.

Next, don't alibi for reading. At a meeting last month I heard a speaker start with, "Last month I made a speech. Among my audience were some gentlemen of the press. Next morning they reported I said something that I didn't say. Today I'm taking no chances. What I say is written down here, and I'm going to read it. Nobody's going to say I said something I didn't." Then he started to read like a bat out of Gehenna. That alibi didn't ring true to me, and I'm sure that it didn't sound right to the audience. Another time I heard a speaker announce, "I can read this speech because there will be a question-and-answer session afterwards." It so happened in that meeting that there was no time for the questions and answers, and the fellow was reading because he was lazy, because he couldn't talk, or for some other reason. If you are going to read the speech, read it without any alibi. You don't help them any when you explain that you understand that you shouldn't be reading.

Why doesn't the audience like the speaker who reads a speech? Perhaps it is because of the way he looks. Think back to the last association meeting you attended. The speaker was introduced. He walked up on the platform and over to the lectern. He laid his manuscript on the lectern. He took hold of the lectern with both hands. The light provided so that he could read shone on his face and reflected from his spectacles. Perhaps there was a microphone. That's what the audience saw, a lectern, a face, and a mike. Then came a voice, reading. There is nothing about that picture to keep an audience awake.

What the read speech needs is life. If you are to read a speech, you should work out some schemes to put life into the reading. You have all heard the radio comedian stop in the middle of a run of long words and ask, "Who writes this stuff anyway?" The man reading a speech needs some such relief as that. Here are some suggestions as to how that relief can be obtained.

1. Read slowly. There is no reason why you should be in such a big hurry to get through. Don't give the impression that you have just so many words and the faster you go the sooner you are through.

2. Watch the deadly monotone used by speech readers. Change your tone. Vary between a whisper and a shout, now one and then the other. Have you ever heard a man reading a speech vary his tone of voice? Do it and you'll be different.

3. Read aloud—give more volume than you need. Check beforehand to see how loud you need to talk and then talk louder than you think you need to. When you put more volume into your voice, you put more energy into what you say. It is so easy when you are up there leaning on a lectern to use too little energy in your speaking.

4. Keep your hands off the lectern. If you anchor your hands, you can't use them to gesture in emphasizing your points.

5. Pause in your reading and do something. Look up, smile, use some gestures, or take a drink of water. Any such device helps relieve the monotony of your reading.

6. Use a parallel illustration. Read the illustration in your manuscript, and then step away from the lectern and say the same thing in different words.

7. Space the relief from reading. Not long ago I saw a man do an excellent job of reading a speech. It seemed to me that he had some device to relieve the monotony on every page of his manuscript. On this page he told a story that helped make a point, on the next page there was a wisecrack, and during the reading of the next page he stepped away from the lectern and used his hands in a demonstration. If you are reading a speech, work in some relief device like this on every page. It takes about two minutes to read a double-spaced typewritten page and such a scheme would give your audience a relief about every two minutes. It might keep them from going to sleep.

8. Stop and ask a question. Don't just read the question as if it were a part of the speech. Come out from behind the lectern and have the audience give you an answer.

9. Use exhibits. This stops your reading while you are showing.



10. Get the script you are reading in talking words. You may feel that because you are reading you can do your script in reading language. But remember, you are talking to an audience, and if you don't use talking words you will sound stiff and stilted.

11. Don't think of your speech as a "paper." Don't call it a paper. Think of it as a talk—not an oration—simply a talk.

My advice is—never read a speech. And I don't mean—hardly ever. But, for the sake of the audience, if you do have to read, recognize the fact that you will have to work and try to do the reading as well as you can.

## TALKING FROM LANTERN SLIDES

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THERE MAY be times when you want to do a talk from lantern slides. Often you want to show a chart with a lot of data on it and your problem is getting it large enough for the audience to see. It's a rather simple job to have that chart put on a lantern slide. Glass slides can be made rather quickly and at small cost, and a whole typewritten page can be reproduced on one of them. With the slide produced, you can project it on a screen in a size large enough for all to see.

If you have a number of such slides and you plan to use them over and over again, you can have them made up on slide film. These show on the screen the same as the glass slides, but they are reproduced on 35-millimeter film. The film rolls up into a small can less than two inches in diameter and your problem of carrying a case of glass slides with you is eliminated. Another advantage is that there is no danger of breaking your slides. If you will ask at the local photograph shop, which makes prints of the photographs you take, they will refer you to firms that will make glass or film slides.

When you are making a talk from slides, if you have a small group it is well to run the projector yourself. Many times when you stand beside the screen you cannot tell whether or not you have the right slide showing. Standing beside the projector you can see the picture as well as the audience sees it. When you operate your own projector, you are not bothered by that projectionist who never quite synchronizes with you.

Just the other night I listened to a lantern-slide talk and the operator was one of those individuals who was willing but seemed all thumbs when it came to operating a projector. The speaker was completely disorganized by the apparent lack of cooperation, but I was sitting by the projector and I know that the operator was working and if possible he was having a more difficult time than the speaker. He would get the wrong slide, and then he'd get the right one but upside down. There is no sense in telling you, you have been there and could tell me what happened. If you have used glass slides, you soon learn that the world is full of people who have no aptitude as projectionists.

The sad thing about this particular meeting was that the group was small and the speaker could have operated his projector himself. But he was one of these big shots who had to have an assistant. Almost his first words were, "I'll need an assistant to run my projector." Don't rush into the hall screaming for a projectionist. Wait until you see how many are attending the meeting, and then decide whether or not it wouldn't be better to operate the projector yourself.

If you use a slide film, you don't have this trouble with the Willie Lumplump who gets your slides shuffled or upside down. On the film the slides are in order, and if the first one is right side up the balance will be that way. But don't think that the slide film will solve all your troubles. It won't—Willie can feed them too fast or miss your signals altogether, knock over the projector, stumble over the light cord, and perhaps do a few more things that as yet have not happened to me. All the above have.

If you use an operator, arrange a signal with him. Avoid the disturbing call, "Next slide please." If you can get one of these toy crickets in a novelty store, you have an excellent signal that can be heard by your operator. In certain meeting rooms there is an electrical signal to the operator's booth. If you are speaking in a large hall, check to see if such a signal is available.

Another way to get your slide on the screen when you want it there is to give the projectionist a copy of your script. Last month I attended a meeting and the man with the slide talk had made this arrangement with his operator. I watched the operator following the words with his finger, using a flashlight to light the manuscript. I had just told myself that this was a fine arrangement, the slides were coming on the screen at the exact time the speaker mentioned a point, and then the speaker crossed up his projectionist. He changed his talk, the right slide showed at the wrong time, and for the next few seconds the speaker and operator had a difficult time getting in step again.

That's one thing about giving the operator a copy of your talk. You have to follow it verbatim. Any script given to the operator should be plainly marked to show where the next slide was wanted.

When most speakers think of using slides, they feel that slides must be used in a darkened room. That is not right. If your slides show type or cartoons or drawings in pen and ink, you can show them in a lighted room if the lamp in your projector is strong enough. Photographs or color slides cannot as a rule be shown in a lighted room, but slides that are black on white usually can. You might check the slides you are to use in a lighted room to see if you can see them. Make this check from behind the projector, for when you stand beside the screen you may not be able to see the slide as well as the audience can. Many times I have heard the speaker say when he looked at a slide, "I guess you can't see that," when the slide was easily visible from where I sat. It is always better to talk in a lighted room because you can check the reaction of the audience to your talk. One of my friends says, "When they turn out the lights I get me some shut-eye." That's why it is a good idea to turn out the projector when you don't need it and to turn on the room lights.

Keep on top of your talk. Remember that you are the one

who is making the talk. Don't stop and look hopelessly at the projection booth or at the operator when the slides won't come on. You are supposed to be running the meeting and any delay of that kind must be your fault. There is no sense standing there like a dummy waiting for something to happen.

If you can't get the next slide you might ask the group, "What is this slide supposed to show?" That will get some response which will prove that the group is awake. Usually when they start to tell you something about the slide the operator will awaken, a new slide will show, and at least you will get a laugh.

Don't deprecate your slides. How often have you heard a speaker say, "This is not a very good photograph, but it is the best I could get." Now the audience may not know that it is a poor photograph and they are certainly not concerned about your problem of getting good photographs. Yet one night I heard a speaker complain all night through his lecture at the quality of his photographs. The photographs didn't look bad to me. I could see and understand his descriptions, but the audience was asking itself, "Why is he showing them if they are so sour?"

Don't apologize for using slides. Some time ago I heard another speaker give his audience a long dissertation on how sorry he was that he was forced to use slides to present his subject. I could see no reason for his alibi. The subject lent itself to that form of presentation. There was no sense making the audience sad because it had to sit through a slide talk.

Slides lend themselves to the humorous talk. I have heard speakers make fun of their photographs, of the people in them, and of the ideas illustrated until they had the audience rolling in the aisles with laughter. I have heard others kid their projectionists until I was quite certain that the mistakes of the latter were a part of the act.

When you are making a slide talk, never tell the audience, "I'll run through these next five slides quickly." By saying

that you indicate that the slides are not too important. If any slide in your set is not important to that audience, leave that slide at home. What can you gain when you hint to an audience that there is not much sense paying attention to a slide you are showing? When you are about to finish, don't announce, "I have only a few slides left." Perhaps they are tired, but your ending should sneak up on them. That's why you should never say, "This is my last slide." Say what you have to say about that last slide, finish, and have the lights turned on.

You have heard some fine talks with lantern slides. You have heard others that seem to be a struggle between the speaker and his operator. There is no reason why a slide talk can't be good if you will forget the mechanical process of showing the slides and concentrate on telling an interesting story to the audience. Here are a few suggestions:

1. You can use slides to obtain larger charts to show.
2. Consider having your charts reproduced on slide film if you are to use them a number of times and are to carry them about with you.
3. When you make a slide talk to a small group (under fifty), run the projector yourself.
4. Arrange some sort of workable signal to the operator. One of the toy noise-making crickets works well.
5. Give the operator a copy of your talk, marked to show where you want the slides.
6. Check your slides to see if they can be used in a lighted room. It is easy for a member of the audience to go to sleep in a darkened room.
7. Don't think that the audience can't see a slide because you can't see it when you stand up beside the screen. Ask if they can see it.
8. If you come to a part of your talk where you don't need a slide, turn on the room lights.
9. Keep on top of the talk. Don't let the clumsiness of the operator disturb you.

10. Don't deprecate your slides.
11. Don't apologize for using slides.
12. Don't announce that you are going to run through a number of your slides quickly. If they are important enough to be shown, they should be shown for the full time.
13. Don't say, "This is my last slide," or announce that you have just a few more slides.

## USING CHARTS TO PRESENT YOUR STORY

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ALL THROUGH this book I have talked of the charts you use in presenting your story. By this time some of you may have said, "This guy is chart crazy." Last month I was setting up some exhibits in a hotel ballroom for a talk I was to do that noon. A number of waiters were watching me. When I was all finished with my arrangements, one of the men asked, "Where are you settin' your charts?" Those fellows had attended a lot of meetings. They knew that charts are used by almost every speaker who has a plan or a cause to present. I, too, attend a large number of meetings and I marvel at the many different methods speakers devise for misusing a set of charts. So if I run on too much about charts, believe me there is method in my madness.

As a rule, a set of charts is dull in itself. It is no more than a number of pages with some words or pictures on each. But if you have a story to present, what device can you use that is as easy to have made and that helps so much in telling your story? So let's explore this matter of charts from two angles—how to make them, and how to use them.

In making up charts to help you present a story, here are a few rules to follow:

1. Make the charts as large as practicable so that they can be seen from any part of the room.
2. Avoid small type. Use type large enough to be seen by all of the audience.



3. Make the chart simple; one idea to a page is a good rule. If that idea can be grasped at a glance so much the better.
4. If the charts are to be shown in a number of places, think about transportation.
5. If you plan to roll the charts so that they will be easier to carry about, have them made on paper that can be rolled. You might consider photographic linen.
6. Work out some arrangement to hang your charts so that they can be used easily. One scheme is to nail sticks about one inch square and the width of the charts at the top of the charts, one stick in front, the other in back. This holds the charts together, and lets you work out a method of hanging them.
7. Large cards make fine charts and you can use both sides, one side for chart 1, the reverse side for chart 2.

In considering charts, you might also think about how you can use their small brother, the card. The card makes an excellent presentation aid. Something to look at—a sentence, a diagram, or a cartoon—just a simple piece of cardboard or paper with something printed on it shown at the right time can help you get over your story. The card is probably the simplest form of idea-expressing aid. It is easy to use and to come by. Once I was in a strange town and was asked to make a presentation of a membership-building plan to a club. My standard presentation was back at my office and to present the plan properly I needed some visual aids. It was just before noon when I agreed to put on the meeting. I hustled out, found a show-card writer, and at four that afternoon I put on the session with a set of show cards.

I have seen a speaker build a whole talk around a single card with a few words on it. He used it to help him get started, again in the course of the talk, and then at the end to help him finish. If there is no show-card writer handy, you can make up the cards yourself, for you do not need finished products. Scribble your notations on pieces of cardboard and use them. All you need is something that your audience can read.

You surely have seen speakers that had the outline of their speeches done on cards. As they talk, they turn the cards. The card gives the audience something to look at and thus helps register the idea. A set of such cards can be packed easily and carried from meeting to meeting. Of course, small cards can be used only with the small audience, for a card is no good unless it can be seen by all present.

I have one friend who never makes a speech unless he has one or more cards to help him in his talk. His cards are small, about eleven by fourteen inches. "They help me get over that initial nervousness," he admits, "and they help me finish." One speaker I know has a card with his name on it that he puts up for all to see. His name is spelled one way and pronounced another. He feels that the card helps him get acquainted with his audience.

A card can be used to show how a word is spelled. Perhaps this membership-drive plan of yours is called the "Tel-em-all" plan. As you say that name, the audience might not understand. But if you have "Tel-em-all" printed on a card and then when you say the words you hold up the card, you will get over the name.

The large card can be used as a chart, but one trouble with the large card is that it has a tendency to buckle. If you have a card chart that keeps bending, you might frame it with wood or have it made on building board so that it will hold its shape. Remember that you won't look too good up before an audience trying to flatten out a card.

You can do almost anything with cards. Not long ago, I saw a speaker use cards to bring out the different features of his plan. He held up a card emphasizing the feature and talked about the feature. For his finish he took all his cards and set them up in a row. Thus the audience saw the features one by one, and they saw a summation of them at the close.

Always when you give the audience something to look at, you command attention. Let's say you are talking and some

of the group are listening while others are not. Then you pick up a card and say in effect, "Look at this." Immediately everybody looks. Now you have 100 per cent attention and you can go on from there.

When you have your charts built, learn how to use them. A chart may turn over easily if you know how to turn it, but very often I have seen speakers give the impression that they were trying to chin themselves on the set of charts instead of trying to show the next one. Your charts may be simple to use but, even so, practice using them. If you have only a small card to show, perhaps there is a more effective way to show it. Figure out that more effective way beforehand, not before the audience.

The glass slide or the slide film may be used as charts and in a lighted room too if the slides are properly made. In Chap. 33 there were suggestions for using slides as charts.

You can make your charts do more effective work if you can get the audience to help you use them. I have seen a speaker have a man in the audience read a chart aloud. He then asked another what the point meant, and then another the same thing. After that he explained the point himself. By giving the audience a part in the presentation, he increased their interest, and he made his points more effectively by the repetition.

When you use a chart, always place it high enough so that all the audience can see it. It is a good idea to check on this. Take a seat in the audience before meeting time and check to see if the heads of the men in the front rows will hide any part of your chart. Remember, there is no reason why an audience member should get a crick in his neck straining to see what you have to show.

Another check to make is to see if the chart has enough light on it. Many times a chart that can't be seen can be seen perfectly if more light is thrown on it. I always check charts I use in a large auditorium with less light than I would have in any hall in which I would speak. I check by asking others

to read to me what is on the charts. With such a check I am certain that the type I use is large enough to be seen. By varying the light I can determine how much light I will need.

Many times the lighting in the meeting room is not sufficient and you may want to bring in a spotlight to light your charts. If you use a spot, watch that you don't get between the light and the charts. Last month I watched a speaker make a chart presentation. He needed some extra light in the room and he had placed a spotlight on the wall so that it lighted his charts adequately. Then as he spoke he stood between the spot and the charts so that his shadow fell on the charts. When he was well into his talk, a man in the audience called, "Stand on the other side, will ya, then we can see." The speaker moved and the group could see perfectly.

There is a lot to the mechanics of using charts that you should know. Always keep your charts covered until you are ready to use them. If you leave a chart uncovered for a group to see, they may get ideas about its message that you don't want them to have.

Next, show only one chart at a time. Recently in a meeting a speaker was making a talk with charts made on large cards. As he finished with a chart, he slid it aside on his easel, but left it in full view of the audience. While he talked about his second chart, two men behind me were arguing about his first chart, the one he had laid aside. Had he put that first chart out of sight, I am sure that he would have had a better chance at the attention of those men. In a summation, it is, of course, all right to show a number of charts at the same time, but when you are talking about one idea, show only the chart on that idea. It is difficult enough to grasp one idea at a time.

Always explain what you want the audience to see when you show a chart. If the chart shows a picture, tell them what you want them to see in the picture. Explain in detail, don't leave too much to their imaginations. Remember I see one thing in a picture, you see another. If you want me to see what you see, point it out to me.

If the chart shows type, you should read it for me so that I get the proper understanding. The simple order to a grocery clerk, "Give me a pound of coffee, drip," can mean that you want a pound of coffee ground for a drip coffee maker or that you are calling the man a drip.

Watch that you don't get in front of your charts. The spotlight incident described indicates how you can hide your charts without knowing it. Stand beside your charts and a little back of them. If you stand at the side, but too far forward, the men at one side in the front row can't see.

Don't use the same introduction to each chart. Once I sat in a meeting in which the speaker as he turned each chart said, "This chart is supposed to show. . . ." He would throw over a chart and again would come, "This chart is supposed to show. . . ." After about five repetitions, when he reached out to turn the chart, the audience seemed to be saying with him, "This chart is supposed to show. . . ." There is no need for such an introduction. Show the chart and start talking about it.

When you first show a printed chart, read everything on it. Don't read the first point and start talking about that first point. Read everything. Let's say your chart reads:

#### THE PLAN

1. The purpose.
2. The policy.
3. What you do.
4. How you follow up.

It is your plan to talk at length on each point. When you first show the chart, read the four points. Then go back and talk about point one: "The purpose." When you first show a chart, the audience starts to read, and it doesn't stop reading until it has read everything on the chart. Since there is no sense in your trying to talk about point one while they read, read with them.

Next, don't study your charts. How often have you seen your guest speaker turn to a chart and then stop to study it? From his actions it might be his long-lost Uncle Louie from St. Louis whom he hasn't seen for twenty-five years. Don't stand peering at a chart as if you didn't know what it meant or what you were to say about it. Get so familiar with your charts that you can glance at any one of them and talk to your audience about the point it illustrates.

Perhaps you have heard a speaker using a set of charts admit, "These charts were made up for another group and I'm not sure that they will show what I want." That's fumbling of the worst kind. Use only charts that apply to this group. If some of the charts in a set are appropriate, use them and forget the others. And never depreciate or apologize for the charts you use. Remember that the audience can't see the shortcomings of your aids as well as you can.

Another fumbler is the speaker who is going along fine in his chart presentation and then decides that he wants to tell you something about a chart that he has passed. Back through the set he goes trying to find the lost chart. When you are presenting a plan from charts, keep going forward. If you forgot something two charts back, nobody knows it but you. And to date I have never seen a speaker who can find that chart in the set without more horsing around than the point is worth.

If one of your committee members is to help you in your chart presentation, don't have him standing up before the group with you while you present your story. Have him sit in the audience while you talk; you take a seat in the audience while he has the floor.

Yes, there is a lot about charts that you should know if you have to present ideas to groups in meeting assembled. Many times you can get up before a group and give a selling speech about an idea and not get to first base in having the group adopt that idea. Again with a chart or two and that same speech or one not quite so good you can sell that same idea 100

per cent. Charts or cards can help you sell your plan, and they can be of greater help if they are used correctly. Let's review these suggestions for using them.

1. Use a card to get started or to finish.
2. Use a series of cards or charts to outline your talk.
3. Use a card to spell out a name that you want the audience to remember.
4. When you use a large card, do something to keep it from buckling.
5. Use cards to emphasize features of a plan.
6. Use a card to get the group to repeat a slogan you want them to use.
7. Use a card to recapture attention when it has strayed.
8. Show only one chart at a time. When you are finished with the one chart, get it out of sight.
9. If your chart shows a picture, explain what you want the audience to see.
10. If your chart has a printed message, read the message so that the audience understands what you want them to understand.
11. Keep any chart covered until you are ready to show it.
12. Stand so that everybody can see your charts.
13. Get enough light on your charts. If you use a spotlight, don't get between the light and the chart.
14. Don't study your charts.
15. When you first show a chart, read everything that is on it.
16. Don't use the same introduction to each chart.
17. Make notes in pencil on your charts to remind you what you are to say about each. Make the notes so small that the audience can't see them but large enough so that you can.
18. Use only charts that help tell your story. Don't use ten charts because you have them when only six apply to this group.
19. Don't, when you are up before an audience, go back through your charts searching for a chart that will prove a point. Keep going forward.

## USING A FILM IN YOUR MEETING

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NOW WE'RE going to have a picture show." How often have you heard the chairman of the meeting introduce a motion picture in that way? You are about to start on your drive for funds, for members, or for the pet charity of your organization. The national headquarters has prepared a film that gives you the solicitation to use or that tells your solicitors how to work. Then the chairman starts with, "We're going to have a picture show." With that introduction, he asks the projectionist to start the film.

Now that is not the way to use a film. If the film is good and is supposed to do more than entertain the group, it should be given a build-up that makes the audience want to see it. Any film that sells an idea or explains a work procedure is worth a talk before the showing. Give it an introduction. Tell the audience what they are going to see and hear in a way that sets up some questions, so that as the film unwinds they are looking for the answers. Let's say the film demonstrates how to handle the solicitation of a prospective member. Then your talk might say, "The film illustrates four steps that should be covered in every interview. How many of you can name those four steps?" Get the idea? Such a question starts members of the group thinking and as the pictures show on the screen they are checking themselves against the procedure shown.

By such an introduction you make the film a part of your meeting, not something dragged in. Don't say, "We have this



film." Say instead, "This film was made up to illustrate these points." Then list the points.

When you have a film to use, never depreciate it. Not long ago, I heard a speaker in his talk before a film say, "There's a lot of baloney in this film, but there is some good stuff too." The film showed how to make a fund solicitation, and as I watched it, I couldn't find the baloney. Perhaps it wasn't the chairman's way to make a solicitation, but the method shown was well thought out and it was one that could be used by most of the solicitors. The baloney was largely the chairman's personal opinion, and there was no call for him to mention it.

If the film didn't help, he should not have shown it. Never knock your film to the audience. If you have a film and a part of it does not apply to the subject of the meeting, but another part does, and because of the latter you want to use the film, tell them about the good part in your opening talk. Then if you feel an explanation is necessary, give it after the showing. But in your opening remarks, never hint that they won't be interested.

If you are going to use a film, try to get set up so that there won't be a lot of fumbling. You know how the zealous member assigned to the lights always turns out the lights too soon, and then the operator of the projector has to ask to have them on again so that he can see to start his machine. You have seen the member yank on the window shade and pull it down on his head. You have seen the film started in a room that could not be darkened sufficiently. You have been in the meeting where a member of the audience moved his feet and broke the electrical connection to the projector in the middle of the film. Try to avoid all of that by getting set up beforehand. And try to have your projectionist ready when you say, "Let's have the film." Don't allow him to putter in the audience while you try to introduce the film.

Usually a film goes so quickly that the audience may not grasp all the points made. For this reason, it is a good idea to

have a discussion on the points made by the film. Let's say the film demonstrated a four-step solicitation for memberships in your organization. Have the four steps listed on a large card, and when the film has been run, bring out the card and discuss the four steps.

To start the discussion, point to the first step and ask one member of the group, "How do you handle this step?" When he answers, ask a second. Carry the discussion further by asking, "Why is this first step important?" By using a series of questions you can carry on the discussion until you are sure that everybody understands the procedure.

Another device to make fuller use of the film is a series of questions on the procedure described. Give out a sheet of questions with "yes" and "no" spaces on the sheet. Then ask the questions and have the audience check the answers. When you have run through the questions, read the answers, and each member of the audience can check his sheet.

Another method is to ask questions and have the audience answer them orally. Here your questions should be ones that start discussion. *Example:* "When the prospective donor says, 'I am already giving to too many charities,' what should be the solicitor's reply?" Put such a question, have a number of members answer it, and you will give all the group good ammunition to use. The film gave one method of answering the question, the members queried will describe their methods, and all the listeners will benefit.

Any scheme to review or repeat the points made by a film helps. In using a movie recently, I saw a chairman use this procedure.

1. A talk before. 3 minutes.
2. Showing of the film. 20 minutes.
3. Question-and-answer period. 10 minutes.
4. Discussion with a card listing the points made by the film. 20 minutes.

Here was using a film for all it was worth—a speech before, questions after, discussion, and then more discussion. The audience liked it, and the points got home.

Films can be of great help in your meetings if you use them as a part of the meeting. But as the chairman you can't figure the time of showing as a rest period. You have to work harder to make the film do its most effective work for you.

Here are some suggestions for the use of films in your meetings. Follow them and you will get more out of your film showings.

1. Check to see that the electric supply is correct for the machine you use.
2. See that your electric cord is long enough to reach an outlet.
3. If you are holding the meeting in daytime, be sure that the room can be darkened sufficiently.
4. If you are holding the meeting at night, arrange to have the lights turned off and on without delay. Assign someone to this job.
5. Set up the projector, thread the film, and focus the first picture. If you hire a projectionist, check with him beforehand so that he is set up and ready.
6. Set the screen so that you get the best effect in the room. It is usually best to set the screen against the wall opposite the windows.
7. Place the screen higher than you feel it needs to be so that the persons in the first rows will not block the view of those behind.
8. Check the seating arrangement to see if everybody can see the screen.
9. Do a helpful talk before the film.
10. After the film has been shown, ask the question, "Would you like to see it again?" If enough do, run it again.
11. Hold a quiz session on the points made by the film.
12. Build a number of card charts, one on each idea in the four-step solicitation. Use these as an outline for a discussion session.

## DON'T TRY TO BE TOO FUNNY

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ALWAYS WE have laughed at the comedian who wants to play Hamlet. Not satisfied with wanting to make you laugh, he wants to make you cry. But don't laugh too loud. Speakers at your meetings have a similar common failing; they want to get laughs.

If you have a meeting with a number of speakers, somehow at some time during his prepared address each feels that he must tell a funny story. The story may not tie in with the theme of the meeting and you wonder why the speaker feels he has to tell it, but he has come to a point where he has to tell a story, just as if he were at the point where he had to turn over a page in his manuscript.

When you speak before the club or your committee, you won't go far wrong if you lay off the gag stories altogether. They belong on the radio or in the night clubs. Let's say you tell a funny story and get your laugh, what then, little boy? Suppose they laugh? You're still nowhere. Suppose they don't laugh? You can't repeat the gag, or explain, "That's a gag, son." Even the good storytellers have gags slap back at them. How many times have you heard the radio comic ruefully admit, "I murdered that one"?

Of course you may be one of those rare individuals who knows how to tell a funny story or to handle a gag. If you are, you're unusual, and I am not trying to tell you anything. However, the great bulk of men who speak before meetings are no more competent to tell a funny story than they are to climb

up the front of the building in which the meeting is being held. There is nothing in the rules that requires you to sound off with a funny story. Because Bill Whoosit tells stories and they go over big, don't think that you must do likewise.

The funny story can be used in your talk, but use it with a purpose. You might use a number of them to relieve the initial embarrassment of getting started. One lecturer I know tells a number of funny stories before he starts his planned talk. He writes out these stories, memorizes them, and rehearses the timing and delivery. He snaps them off—bang, bang, bang—and puts the audience in stitches. Then he starts his prepared talk. "I get them relaxed and then go to work on them," he admits. Used in this way the stories are a part of the man's plan: they are not dragged in just because he thinks he should tell a funny story.

Another use for the story or gag is to liven up a dull portion of a speech. The joke or anecdote can be used in such a spot with good effect, but usually there is no reason why a story about someone's use of the plan or what someone said about the plan would not be just as effective.

There is no reason why anyone can't learn to tell a story and to tell it well. Did you ever hear a small boy tell funny stories? Half of the time he loses that gag line. Take that same boy, write out the story for him, and have him memorize it and rehearse it, and he will tell it well. I have proven that with a recording machine and my number two son. First, I had him tell the story as he told it. Then I had him write it in speaking form, memorize and rehearse it, and tell it from script. The second time he was perfect. He got the gag line exactly right. The trouble with most storytellers is that they won't take the trouble to write out the story in speaking form, memorize, and rehearse it.

There is a difference between the story as it might be written in a joke book and the way it should be written for telling before an audience. The joke book starts its anecdote,

"A story is told of a reply of a student to a question in an examination paper." The speaker would start, "This student was taking an exam." Further, the speaker would have a plan for fitting in the story, perhaps, "Our attitude towards this proposal should be like the answer of the student. . . ." Then he would tell the story of the student and his reply, and give a repetition of that reply as the attitude the meeting should take on the question.

Almost anyone can tell a story if he will take the trouble to learn how to tell that particular story. The reason there are so many poor stories told at meetings is that someone tells the speaker a story at lunch and he springs it on the meeting in the afternoon. What was a good story over the luncheon table often becomes a floperoo before an audience.

If you feel that you need to add a bit of humor to this presentation of yours by using a gag story, try to find a story that proves a point for you. Then when you have it, write it out as you would speak it, memorize, and rehearse it.

In my talks I tell a lot of stories that get laughs but these are not joke stories. They are anecdotes about my experiences, about something I saw, about something that happened to me, about what the president of the club said to me, or what the committee wrote me about the club. The stories get laughs, yes, but they prove points too.

If you feel that you have to tell a gag story, select one that you think is funny. If you don't think that the story is quite funny, you won't do such a good job telling it. Watch the short story, the wisecrack, or the gag that is in one sentence. Often you tell these so fast that the audience doesn't have a chance to get the point.

Always test out your funny story. Tell it to your secretary, the little woman at home, the kids, or your friends. Get their reactions before you bring it to a meeting. If it falls flat when you tell it before a meeting, either discard it or go to work on it. Study it, rehearse it, and try it again. If it goes over,

that's fine; if it doesn't, throw it away. But if every story you tell seems to fall flat, give up gag stories. You are not built to tell them.

One trouble with the gag story is that the story on which you have done so much work may have been told to this same group by the speaker they had last week. Stories have a habit of traveling fast. Many times when you start to tell a story, the smiles on the faces of the members of the group tell you that they have heard it before. One way to get over this hump is to take the story you plan to use and amplify it; give it a little more body, a bit more build-up to that gag line. Then when you tell the story that the audience heard last week, they will say, "We heard it told a little differently."

If the story is in dialect, don't try to do it unless you are familiar with the dialect. How many times have you heard the guest speaker stumble around with a dialect and you can't tell whether it's supposed to be a Greek or an Irishman and you thought he said Scandinavian!

Beware of the story that might be in bad taste. One speaker I know in his early days had a habit of telling vulgar stories. For years he hasn't told such a story, but even today he says that when men who were in his audiences in the old days introduce him to others, they add, "You oughta hear this fellow tell stories." And the tone they use indicates the kind of stories. Avoid stories about race or sect. The laugh can't be as important as an offense to some member of the audience.

In my speaking I have found that the story I tell about my own experiences with my kids, the man with whom I do business, the bartenders, taxi drivers and others I meet gets more laughs than the funny stories I once tried to tell. In telling an anecdote, put yourself into it. If a friend tells a story about one of his experiences and this story illustrates a point you want to make, tell the story as if it happened to you. If the story is about the friend's boy, tell it about your boy.

Today I duck the funny story altogether and I advise others to do the same. I claim that by using only point-making stories about experiences, plans, and people, the speaker is relieved of the task of trying to be funny. You don't need to be funny to make a good talk. You need only to be interesting.

But if you are one of these speakers who feels that you have to tell a funny story and you want to be rewarded with a laugh, not a polite "hun-hh," but a real belly laugh, I can give you a plan. It is one that I have tested and tried again and again in my talk on "How To Run A Meeting."

A while back I mentioned the story told at luncheon that became a floperoo before the meeting. Usually it is not the speaker's fault. The story is funny. But the speaker just didn't understand some of the fine points about the technique of telling a story before an audience. All of us have had the experience of telling a story before an audience, a story that we thought was pretty good, a story that we had rehearsed and had letter-perfect; but when we finished and came to the place where the audience was supposed to laugh, we were greeted with a polite "hun-hh." Well, we didn't get the laugh we expected, and so we smile and go on from there. Perhaps a professional storyteller would have produced a laugh with that first story, but we didn't. Perhaps you have wondered why, and I can't give you the answer. It may have been because you sneaked up on the audience. They weren't expecting a story, weren't ready to laugh, and when the story came they were surprised.

Now if your stories have been getting that polite "hun-hh," here is a tip that will get laughs for you. Don't rely on one story. Arm yourself with a sequence of stories. Have three at least. Tell the poorest of the three first, next poorest second, and so on, winding up with your best story. Tell the first story and take your "hun-hh" with a smile. Tell the second, take whatever kind of a laugh you get on that, and go to the third



—a story a bit better than the second. With most groups, the third story will get the laugh you wanted. If the third doesn't get the laugh, go on to the fourth or fifth.

After some experience with the plan you will know whether or not you are going to get a laugh on your third story. If the audience seems cold after your second story, plan to go on beyond the third. If it seems that you are going to get the big laugh on your third, bring on your best story and let them have it. You can check this technique against any of the speakers who get a lot of laughs. Note that their first story or gag does not get the loud laugh, but as they go through the talk the laughter builds up with each successive gag until at the end they are getting laughs on remarks that would not have rated a polite "hun-hh" at the start.

There is a plan for telling stories that gets laughs. Don't rely on one story. Tell one, a second, a third, and so on, until you get them laughing as you want them to. In my talk on this subject I demonstrate this procedure. I tell the audience that I will show them how to get laughs with gag stories; then I start telling. After I have finished, I explain what I have done. Almost always I get the full laugh at the end of three stories. At times I have needed four or five. Differences in audiences, difference in the ventilation of the room, the seating arrangement, or fatigue of the audience—these are a number of reasons why your stories may not get laughs. But the one-two-three sequence still holds good. Don't, for goodness' sake, feel discouraged if your single story flops. That story before that audience in that room might flop for the best storyteller too. The difference is that he knows enough to go on and tell other stories until he gets his laugh.

When you try out this plan, wait for your laughs. Give the audience time to get the point. Don't go on to the next story as soon as you finish the gag line of the first. Let the point sink in. You have heard the radio comedian say, "O.K. I'll wait," when he gets a belated laugh. His studio audience tells

him that his gag was a bit too fast. Always give them time to laugh.

Don't apologize for a story that you plan to tell. If you have any doubts about the story, leave it untold. Don't preface a story with a statement such as, "There's a story about an old Irishman, it's probably not true, and it probably never happened, but it might be worth telling." If the story has all those liabilities, why bring it up? Start your story with an opening such as: "Once upon a time. . . . Not long ago. . . . The other day. . . ." Start at the start. It's probably a poor story anyway, the way you tell it, so don't handicap it with an introduction that tears it down. Eliminate such introductions as, "That reminds me. . . ." No such introduction is needed.

I realize that I make no impression at all when in my talks I advise speakers not to tell stories to get pointless comedy relief. That hearty laugh from the audience is like two double bourbons, one after the other, to most speakers. That's why they will go to any length to get that laugh. If the purpose of the speech is to entertain, to make the audience laugh, such efforts are O.K. But if the speech is to explain a plan or to sell a cause, the comedy relief is not absolutely necessary. Molly McGee would make a great assistant for most of the guest speakers. Her "Tain't funny, McGee" would rule out most of the speaker's gags and so-called funny stories.

Here are some suggestions for being funny.

1. If you can't tell a funny story, don't. Ask somebody to tell you whether or not you can.
2. Don't drag a funny story in by its heels. Have a legitimate purpose: to warm a cold audience, to relieve initial embarrassment, or to brighten a dull portion of the talk.
3. If you feel you must tell a funny story, write it out as it should be spoken, memorize the wording, and rehearse its delivery.
4. Try out stories about your experiences that might make a point. Such stories can be pointed to get laughs and they help sell your deal.

5. Stories about your own embarrassment usually get laughs.
6. Pick your stories with care. Avoid the vulgar or any theme that might offend any of your audience.
7. Don't use any introduction to your story such as, "There is a story about . . ." or "That reminds me. . . ."
8. Don't try dialect unless you are good at it.
9. Put the stories in personal form. Don't tell what happened to a friend of yours—tell what happened to you.
10. Don't crowd the stories; give the audience time to laugh.
11. If you must tell funny stories, organize on the one-two-three plan described.

## USING PRINTED MATTER IN YOUR MEETING

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I HAD read the circular that the solicitor for the fund gave me. Next time I saw him, I commented, "That was a well-written circular you gave me."

"Yeah?" Then he admitted with a sheepish grin, "You know, I've never read it."

And perhaps it wasn't his fault. Usually one of those meetings to organize a drive is made up of a lot of talks. When everybody has had his say, it is time to go home. Then the secretary or the chairman says, "Here is the literature you are to use. This is the circular you give the prospect; this is the application blank; this is the receipt you sign for the donation. It's all in this envelope." Quick, like that! Is it any wonder that the worker doesn't read it?

Now it is O.K. to give workers the hot talk about the cause, to explain how everybody is breathlessly waiting for them to ring the doorbell and ask for the donation. A certain amount of such eyewash is necessary, but that printed matter with which the solicitor will work deserves a better break than it usually gets in most meetings. That printed matter may be all the worker has to rely on when he is out making calls. It may give him the answer to the questions the prospects will ask. It may give him sales arguments that will increase the five-dollar donation to ten. Why then shouldn't you try to get the worker to understand what the printed matter is and how it should be used?

Of course, some of the workers will take home the pieces and read every word of them. But even that may not be enough. Most of us read fast and we may not get the full significance of a statement in the circular. How many times when reading a printed piece about some cause in which you have been working for years have you said, "Gee, I never knew that"? If experienced workers miss points, why shouldn't the uninitiated miss more points?

But first, let's talk about producing the piece that is designed to sell memberships or donations to prospects. Most such pieces are printed by the national headquarters and you don't have to worry about writing them or getting them printed. But if you do have to get up your own printed matter, here are some suggestions. Let's say that you are the chairman of the campaign and you have to prepare the circular that will interest the prospect. Here is a method that works well.

First, make up a list of all the reasons why this prospect should join, contribute, or whatever it is you want him to do. Put down all the reasons you can think of; then have a number of copies of this list made and send it to the members of your committee. Ask them to make any additions or corrections. When you have the answers from all, be sure to telephone every member to make sure that he has his chance to comment, and then call a meeting and discuss the list with the additions the group has made. Get the group to agree on what are the most important reasons, and then rate these reasons, one, two, three, and so on. Now amplify each reason. Your original may have been a one-line reason, such as "Good Fellowship." That can mean many things to many people. But if you get the group to discuss what should be included in this "Good Fellowship" reason, you get the ideas needed to do a good printed piece.

Next write your piece and mail copies to the members of your committee, and get their approval. When you have taken your circular through these steps, you will have a good piece.

Farm out your application blank, your receipt, and working printed matter to a subcommittee of accountants or lawyers. They will no doubt see that you have the kind of printed matter that will work.

When you have the printed matter, you can build your whole meeting around it. Assign one man to the circular, and have him explain what it is, what it is for, and how it is to be used. Assign another man to the application and another to the receipt. In such a meeting, I'd suggest that you reverse the order I have here. Put the circular man on last, for his story is likely to be more interesting. You might do a skit on that circular to show how it is to be used. In drives of this sort, everything depends on your workers. The more you do to help them understand the jobs they have, the more successful your activity will be. That inspirational speech by your president may be grand at the meeting, but when the worker is out with a prospect he may find more use for the answer to a question. Try to think of this organization meeting as an effort to equip the workers—not just to hand them the literature they will need, but to show them how to use it effectively.

I have seen whole meetings profitably devoted to the circular the worker will use—on why it was produced, the thinking behind it, what it is supposed to do, and how it should be used. Perhaps that wouldn't be possible in every meeting. But even when you give the piece a small spot, you can do it in such a way that the group realizes that the piece is important to them in their work. Here are a few ways the importance of a circular can be built up in your meeting.

1. HAVE ONE MAN READ IT.—If the circular is small, you can have one man read all of it.

2. HAVE THE GROUP READ IT.—If it is a larger piece, have one man read a paragraph, a second man another, and so on. Here you start in the front of the booklet and go through to the finish. One of your difficulties is that those who read faster might be pages ahead of the slower readers. To prevent this announce that you

plan to call on different men, and you want each to keep the place. If you jump about the room in selecting your readers, you ensure that every man keeps pace with the reader. If a man is not a good reader, you can call on the next almost as soon as the first begins to stumble. This scheme makes everybody read the circular. Recently in a meeting, the chairman asked, "How many here have read the circular?" A number of hands went up. Then the chairman went on, "How many have read every word of it?" This time not so many hands. By having the group read the circular you get all hands up on that last question.

3. TALK ABOUT THE COPY.—The copy in any printed piece is usually good writing and it is not too difficult to find paragraphs that are worth comment. When you present the circular, you can tell the group, "I want you to notice how this writer describes this feature." That gives the group a suggestion as to how they can shape their wording to present the point best.

4. REFER TO SOMETHING.—When you do not have time to read the circular, refer to something in it, some bit of copy, a paragraph, a photograph, or a chart. Build a story about that particular point. Get the group to examine the picture closely or to study the diagram. Ask them why that picture is important, and then how they will use that picture with a prospect. In this way you start a discussion on the point.

5. REHEARSE A PLAN OF USE.—Even if the circular is a simple one that is designed to be handed to prospects, there is a right and a wrong way to hand it out. One man may say as he hands out the piece, "Here's a little circular on the organization." Another may say, "There's a big story in this that'll interest you." A third would say, "It takes just two minutes to read this." By rehearsing how it should be done, you can bring out the methods of use that will make the piece of greatest help. You can have all the workers fill out an application blank or a receipt. How many times when you ask a worker what a line was for has he replied, "I never saw that before." He was working with the application blanks, not reading or looking at them.

6. SHOW HOW TO MARK IT.—Marking a paragraph in the piece can get the prospect to open it and read that paragraph. Let's say the prospect is not at home. The solicitor leaves a piece of literature for him with the person who comes to the door, saying, "I

want Mr. X to be sure to read this paragraph (he marks the paragraph with a pencil). I'll be back to talk to him about it."

Then when Mr. X is told there was a man to see him, Mr. X asks, "What did he want?"

The one who took the circular says, "He wanted you to read the part he marked."

This procedure can be demonstrated in the meeting, and it gives the workers a plan to use on the prospect who is difficult to find.

7. CHART ITS USE.—You can have a large chart made showing the uses to which a worker can put a circular. This can be used as an outline of a discussion of the uses of the piece.

8. SHOW ONLY ONE PIECE AT A TIME.—Don't confuse the workers by giving them too many pieces to use or by trying to cover all the pieces fully. In a meeting a man can absorb just so much.

When you are running your drive-organization meeting, don't give the group member an envelope full of different pieces and hope that he will use all of them effectively. It's better to give him one piece, in any case as few as possible. You can make it seem easy to use one circular. If you give him three or four, you make the job seem difficult. And he may never read one of them.

But when you pass out literature to workers, make every piece seem important. You want them to read it and to use it. If it is to their interest to read that circular and to use it properly, show them why. Then show them why it is to their advantage to use it right.



## SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR SPEAKERS

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**AT** TIMES in your club work you will have to get up on your feet and give out with some more or less well-chosen words on your project or plan. Here are a few suggestions as to how you can make your talk more effective.

1. **TRY TO GIVE THE BEST PERFORMANCE.**—Whenever you talk, try to give the best performance of anybody on the program. Such a spirit of competition will make you better. Don't start with the thought that some other speaker is going to be better than you. Get up with the thought that you will be the best.

2. **TALK LOUDER.**—Always talk louder than you need to when you speak to a group. This makes you exert more energy and thus you throw more effort into what you say. Check this the next time you speak to a group. Talk in a normal tone of voice, loud enough so that they all can hear. Then talk a bit louder, and notice how you seem to have put on more steam. When you talk louder than necessary, you get more attention. That's natural, for if you seem steamed up about the subject, the group feels that it too should be interested.

3. **USE YOUR OWN LANGUAGE.**—A lot has been written in this book about using your own language. Don't talk like a stuffed shirt. Use simple words, avoid technical words, try to be specific, steer away from overwordage, and don't overwork any one word.

4. **WATCH YOUR POSITION.**—When you make your talk, get into a position where you can talk to the whole group, where all can see you. If the chairman stays put up front, don't turn to talk to him. Talk to the audience always.

5. **DON'T REFER TO YOUR TALK.**—Try not to mention your talk or your notes. The audience is not interested in them as mechanical aids. Never say such things as, "I'd like to depart from my prepared address." Ever hear a good speaker refer to his talk as an address?

6. **NEVER DEPRECATE.**—Never deprecate anything—your talk, your notes, your presentation aids, or your subject. You don't have to tell an audience that you are not too hot. They have a sense of smell.

7. **DON'T APOLOGIZE.**—You have heard speakers apologize for everything, for being there talking, for talking on the subject, or for not being prepared properly. There is no profit in such apologies. The audience will soon learn whether or not you should apologize.

8. **DON'T WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT DICTION.**—That is, don't worry while you are before an audience. Worry about it at home as much as you want, but not while you are speaking. If you say "git" for "get" or forget the last "g" in "going," let the slip ride, don't go back and correct it. If you worry about your diction, you'll get your ideas all tangled up.

9. **DON'T USE THE SAME MOTION.**—Don't use the same motion over and over. If you are inclined to point your finger at the audience, forget that you once taught school and substitute another motion for some of your threatening gestures.

10. **STAND STILL.**—Stand in the same position as much as possible. Don't march up and down while you harangue the group. Put that walking energy into gestures with your hands and arms.

11. **LEAVE YOUR SPECS ALONE.**—Put your spectacles on or leave them off. Don't be taking them off and putting them on, off when you talk to the customers, on when you read your notes. If you need specs through a part of the speech, leave them on through the whole speech.

12. **WATCH YOUR NERVOUS HABITS.**—Not long ago I saw a speaker rub his tummy for about five minutes when he first started his talk. Yes, he had a vest and a key. But what can a speaker say while he rubs his tummy that is more interesting than the spectacle of a man rubbing his tummy in public. Don't wriggle, rub your nose, comb your hair, or light a cigarette.

13. **DON'T ANCHOR YOUR HANDS.**—Don't clasp your hands behind you. Don't shove them into your coat pockets. Don't fold your arms either in front or in back of you; don't hold your elbows. Leave your hands free. When your hands are free, you will use them, and any motion adds effect to what you say.

14. **FACE THE AUDIENCE ALWAYS.**—When you use a presentation aid, don't talk to the aid. Learn how to use the aid while facing the audience. If you use notes, don't talk to the notes.

15. **DON'T TRY TO COVER TOO MUCH.**—Don't try to give the audience a ten- or fourteen-step procedure to remember or to work. Three or four points are more likely to stick. If you have a lot to cover, consider if it would not be better to cover just a few of the more important points in the time allotted instead of giving every point the once-over lightly treatment.

16. **MAKE SURE THE AUDIENCE CAN SEE.**—Don't try to show an object that can't be seen by all the group. On your charts, don't use type so small that it can't be read. Let them see the speaker too. Don't stand in a dark corner or in a shadow.

17. **GET YOUR SUIT PRESSED.**—Get your suit pressed before any performance. At least don't come to the meeting in the suit in which you slept. So many speakers seem to do that. If you haven't noticed, take a look next meeting.

18. **DON'T MONKEY WITH YOUR CLOTHES.**—Don't tug at your necktie, don't twirl your watch chain, and don't adjust the handkerchief in your coat pocket. When you do such things, you attract the interest of the audience away from your talk and to the clothes. Maybe it is a five-dollar necktie, but so what?

19. **GET UP ON A STAGE.**—Get up on a raised platform before you talk. Let the audience have a look at you. If you are up above them, all can see you without straining. Perhaps it is not worth straining to see you.

20. **TRY FOR VARIETY.**—Don't talk at the same pitch all the time, whisper now, shout later, and use a normal tone in between. Don't talk continuously. Run in a quiz or an audience participation stunt.

21. **DON'T PROMISE.**—Don't promise that you are going to talk about something in a minute or that you will show them something later. Keep all that up your sleeve. Besides, they are hoping you'll finish in a minute. Don't disillusion them.

22. **DON'T WORRY THE AUDIENCE ABOUT TIME.**—Never mention time in your meeting. Remember it is their time you are taking. Don't tell them that you have only ten minutes to cover a subject or that you are rushing through a subject because you don't have enough time. Don't apologize for the time you are taking. If your information is worth while to them you have nothing to apologize for.

23. **KEEP AWAKE.**—Stand on your toes when you make this talk. Don't sag or relax. "At ease" or "Parade rest" is no good for a speaker. Try to seem alert. Give the impression that you are full of energy, rarin' to go. Such an attitude is contagious.

24. **DON'T LEAN ON ANYTHING.**—Don't drape yourself on a lectern, half sit on a table, or lean on a chair. Stand away from such temptation. When you lean or sit, you can't put the fire into your talk, and most organization projects need all the fire that can be put into them.

25. **GET A GOOD ENDING.**—Don't let your talk piddle out. That old perennial, "Thank you," is not a good ending. If possible, give the audience something to do. Ask for a vote or a show of hands. Work out one of those simple one-two-three endings described in Chap. 20.

Now, of course, you can't remember all of that. I don't myself. But if you can remember some of it, you will increase the effectiveness of your talks. One way to improve yourself at presentation is to sit in meetings and watch the speakers. When a man handles a point well, make a note of how he does it. When a speaker with a good subject bores his audience, try to analyze what he fails to do. Such observation will make a good drill in the principles laid down in this book.

## WHY YOU SHOULD WANT TO PUT ON GOOD MEETINGS

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HERE YOU ARE at page 214. To get here you had to wade through a lot of suggestions—suggestions for putting on better meetings. You must be serious to have read this far. Well, why should you want to put on better meetings? First there is the thrill of the job well done, the bouquets, the handclaps, the pats on the back. There is no reward quite like the approval of the dour old member who says nothing unless he means it. When he says, "Joe, it sure was swell," you know you have delivered.

But let's discuss the answer to that question in a broader sense. The fellow who can put on good meetings proves publicly that he is a leader. If you're going to be anything in your business, your industry, or your community, you must be a leader. And the fellow who runs the meetings advertises that fact stronger than anybody else. People think of him as a good man because they have seen the meetings that he put on. Other men may have just as much knowledge and ability, but he gets an opportunity to demonstrate.

Just the other day the group around the luncheon table was talking about a fellow in town who had been selected for a good job.

"What did he ever do to deserve such a job?" one of the group asked.

"Well, he ran that last fund drive," another answered.

"Anyone could have done that," the first man said. "It was a setup."

"Yes," agreed the first. "It was a natural."

There was more of it and I smiled as I listened, for not once did the men hit upon the reason why this fellow had picked off this job. It wasn't because he had managed the drive. It was pretty much as they said; the drive was destined to success. But in running the drive, this fellow had done something a little different. He had put on some rather spectacular meetings. The meetings attracted attention. They were dramatic, different, organized so that they moved off without the usual fumbling. And a few months later, when there was a good job open, it went to the fellow who ran the meetings.

As you think over the people in your town, you'll find that the most of the men who run good meetings have good jobs. Think of the fellow who is the best meeting man you know. What's his job?

Today, most junior executives realize that public speaking is a part of their job. Many of them study the subject and take special courses. That's a fine idea. They have learned that good talkers seem to get ahead fastest, and they want to take advantage of that fact. Unfortunately, most fellows who take public-speaking courses don't get enough opportunity to practice what they learn. The way to get that practice is to get into your club activities, and to get on the committee that puts on the meetings. At the start give any job, no matter how small it may be, all you have. Do that and it won't be long before you're handling bigger jobs. Get to the point where you're the fellow who puts on the meetings. On the committee you get a chance to talk regularly, and with practice there is no reason why you can't be the best platform man in your town.

Yes, I mean you, even though you are an untried club member, one of the group who never open their mouths. Even if you are a worker in that great army of the young and inexperienced, you can put on a good presentation, you can make a good talk, you can put on a meeting if you teach yourself how.

Why am I so positive? Well, in one day's time I've trained

men who have never made a speech before, but who knew their subject, to put on such meetings. I had them prepare a script for a speech and organize some presentation aids. Then at nine o'clock in the morning I started them on the rehearsal of their speech and the handling of the props they were to use. That evening at eight o'clock they went on the stage before groups up to two hundred people and put on a bang-up meeting.

Those men were fortunate in that they had a coach. You probably won't have any such help. So you've got to do most of it yourself. And the way to do that is to study the meetings of your club, to observe what the speakers do, and to practice doing it. Whenever a good speaker appears in your town, go hear him. It's seldom very difficult to crash any kind of gathering just to hear the speakers. As you watch these experts, observe how they do demonstrations, how they handle charts, how they use their hands, how they work with meeting groups. Watch the fellow who holds the audience in the hollow of his hand. How is he doing it—by his words, his manner, his method of demonstration or presentation? These experts will make mistakes, but they will do things well, too. Observe them and learn from them.

The ability to put on good meetings pays such great dividends that any man can profitably afford to spend the time to learn how. Oftentimes a good meeting man is put in a supervisory job over the head of the fellow who may be a better executive. That's perhaps as it should be, because the man in the management job needs to lead the people under him, and the man who can put on a good training meeting has proved that he can lead groups.

So if you want to get ahead, get into this business of putting on meetings. When someone says to you, "Joe, will you put on a meeting for these people?" he's doing you a favor. Learn to make a good speech, teach yourself to present your story with persuasive showmanship. And even when you get good

don't be satisfied with your performance. Don't rest on your laurels. Keep cutting and trying, analyzing and improving. Get good and then get better.

Then if there is any spark of the crusader in your make-up, think of the dues-paying members, the faithful Joes and Janes, who come to your meetings rain or shine. They deserve a better break than they get in most clubs. Set yourself up as the fellow who is going to see that they get it. Oh, I know, most of them would settle for what they're getting now. But if you give them better meetings, you'll earn their everlasting gratitude.

It won't be easy. It may be a long pull, but it is worth the effort. As I sit here typing these words, I say good luck to you. I know that despite this book, despite all that I or any wiser man can say, people will go on yawning in meetings as long as this world lasts. But don't let it be said that they yawned with you—with others, maybe, but not with you.



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